

CANNOCK CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 19, 2013

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Cut a dash

Santas race through town in fundraiser

Page 11



Panto time

Round-up of all the festive shows

Page 38



Back on track

Pitmen end losing run and return to summit

Back page



Memorial given the go-ahead for island

A MINERS memorial will be installed on a main roundabout in Rugeley despite a bitter dispute that led to police being called in.

Fears were raised that erecting the statue, featuring four 8ft-high miners, on the Globe Island – which connects three busy roads – could affect visibility.

New locations were being investigated but the plans were approved at a private meeting of council chiefs and officers – providing measures are put in place such as positioning the memorial a certain distance from the kerb and ensuring it does not obscure drivers' views.

Town and county councillor Geoff Martin had asked highways chief Mark Waddington to approve the memorial.

Survey

A survey of around 7,000 people revealed the majority of residents supported the plans.

Councillor Waddington said: "The public have made it clear that they support the plans and I did not realise the passion in the area about it."

"There have been some nasty elements to this in recent weeks and I hope we can draw a line under it."

Town council chairman John Rowley said: "Democracy has shown that people wanted the memorial."

Court bid on nursing boss

A HIGH Court bid is being launched to get the former director of nursing at Stafford Hospital struck off.

Janice Harry, aged 60, was found guilty of misconduct and cautioned in November. She was found to have put patients at risk after failing to ensure there were enough nurses on wards between 1998 and 2006.

The Professional Standards Agency has gone to the High Court over what it claims was an 'unduly lenient' punishment.

● Notices – Page 2

No real deal for Julie as box 13 proves unlucky



Box 13 is opened – to reveal just a tenner

A FITNESS adviser at a Cannock gym did battle with The Banker for just £10 – but grandmother-of-two Julie Southall admitted appearing on Deal or No Deal had been an unforgettable experience.

Mrs Southall, who works at Miss Fit Gym in Cannock, used her appearance on the show to encourage more people to sign up to the organ donor register having dedicated her game to her late son Richard who died after being hit by a car in West Bromwich, 20 years ago.

The 11-year-old had carried an organ donor card and his organs were donated to save lives. Host Noel Edmonds added: "I think we should dedicate your game to

Richard." Mrs Southall, aged 55, of Coven, gathered to watch the screening with more than 30 friends and family at the White Hart pub in Cannock.

She said she had wanted to win some cash to help her daughter Cathryn. She was just eight when her brother died and helped care for her mother when she suffered shingles and lost her hair shortly after Richard's death.

After turning down £13,000 twice, the offers dropped to £5,000 and £3,800, which she also refused to accept. But Box 13 turned out to be unlucky as she walked away from the Dream Factory with just £10.



Julie Southall with host Noel Edmonds

Council to make its objection over HS2

AN official objection to the second phase of HS2 is to be submitted by Staffordshire County Council.

The authority is putting the finishing touches to the document.

The line would carve up areas of Staffordshire countryside and is due to begin operating in 2026.

The council's objection lays out the reasons why it should not go ahead. It goes into detail about countryside and woodland that will be affected and the impact on villages.

The document has been drawn up with comments from parish councils and community action groups along the Phase Two route.

Powers

It will be presented to the county council this week for approval.

Meanwhile, a suppressed government report into the high-speed rail line raises concerns about its proposed construction timetable, management and costs.

Ministers are trying to use rare emergency powers to block publication of the report, which was written in November 2011 and questions the 'risky timetable', the capability of those involved and whether enough work has been done to get to the bottom of the costs of the project.

● Phases – Page 19

Rise 'not fir' say families

FAMILIES have hit out at Christmas tree price hikes on Cannock Chase.

Visitors are spending £45 for a 6ft fir – an increase on last year of more than 10 per cent. Taller trees cost up to £125.

The Forestry Commission, which maintains the land, says many trees come from Scotland or north Yorkshire and the increase is due to transportation costs.

It said prices had been frozen for the last three years but £5 was added this year to help meet costs.

HOSPITAL SET FOR £20m SHAKE-UP

CANNOCK Chase Hospital is in line for a £20m upgrade with 350 new staff as part of a major shake-up of Stafford Hospital.

Major building work will take with up to 10,000 patients able to have planned surgery each year.

Nearly all of the hospital will be used. At the moment just 40 per cent is occupied.

Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust is to be dissolved under proposals from administrators with the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust taking over the Brunswick Road site. Patients will be transported to and from New Cross and Cannock by bus.

Empty

Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley said: "It will be more fully used by The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust rather than lying half empty as it does now."

"It will be refurbished and improved. Never again will Cannock Chase Hospital be neglected to the point of closure, as it was so shamefully under the management of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust."

"Furthermore, the Administrators have listened to my concerns over

by Rob Gollidge

the disproportionate effect that their original proposals would have had on the people of Rugeley.

"That is why it is so important that low-risk births will continue at a midwife-led unit at Stafford Hospital and that ante and post-natal care will also remain."

New Cross boss David Loughton said: "This is confirmation of what we have been working on for some time now. It's a good step for Wolverhampton and Cannock."

"This has had huge implications on us in Wolverhampton as well. I think having in-patient surgery and elective care in Cannock is a really positive move"

Around 800 employees at Stafford and Cannock hospitals will be become employees of the by the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals.

Charity funds supplemented by company



Area fundraising manager Janos Toth with Lesley Keenan, Gail Bate, Sarah Dinshaw, Terry Wright, Janet Harrison, Shelly Murray, Sue Massey and Adam Crookshank

A RUGELEY mail order business has delivered a boost to a cancer charity, raising nearly £15,000 in just a year.

Vitamin and supplements supplier ZipVit, at Towers Business Park, has raised £78,326 since 2008 for Macmillan Cancer Support. A cheque for this year's total of £14,960 was handed over this week.

With every order placed over £25 customers have the option of either a free gift, or making a £1 donation to Macmillan.

Sales manager Sarah Dinshaw said: "We have always offered our customers free gifts when they spend over a certain value, but we started to receive suggestions not to opt for the gifts and to possibly donate to charity instead."

"The outcome has been astonishing."

Janos Toth, Macmillan's area fundraising manager, said: "We are extremely grateful to ZipVit and to their customers for their continued support."

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NEWS

CONTENTS

News Feature	6
Letters	8
Around the clubs	13
Travel	23
Focus On . . .	28
Christmas TV preview	33
Festive TV listings	34-37
What's On	38
Motoring	39
Sport	50-52

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New classes fit the bill for youngsters

A FITNESS centre in Cannock is to become one of the first in the country to offer children the chance to take part in a special health and exercise programme.

BC One CrossFit Cannock, at Walford Works, on Longford Road, is offering special CrossFit fitness classes to children aged from three to 17 in the New Year.

Ian Stanley, owner and head coach of BC One CrossFit

Cannock, is one of a handful of qualified coaches in the UK with the authority to teach the special child CrossFit programme.

The sessions will start in January and could be rolled out to schools. Sessions will take place after-school and on a Saturday lunchtime.

Children will be placed into age and skill ability groups and will learn through play using old

school games such as dodgeball but with a twist.

Ian, who set up BC One CrossFit Cannock in February 2012, said: "We develop the programme to suit the ages and ability of the children and teenagers involved."

To join BC One Cannock or for information on the children's classes, call 01543 897078 or visit www.bc-one.co.uk



BC One CrossFit Owner Ian Stanley and children who are testing out the new classes

Tents are collected to help homeless

THOUSANDS of tents left behind at Staffordshire's V Festival are being used to house families left homeless by the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Each year Rotary clubs from across the Black Country, Staffordshire and Shropshire descend on the aftermath of the festival at Weston Park to collect the tents, sleeping bags, and carry-mats left behind.

The items are checked over and stored ready to be dispatched to natural disaster and humanitarian crisis zones across the globe.

Destroyed

More than 100,000 homes have been destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan. Some towns and cities have virtually been wiped out.

Peter Barke, press officer for the Rotary Club of Cannock, said: "Thanks to the people who left the equipment behind and the Rotary members who gave up their time to collect them, there are people affected by the disaster who now have a temporary home."

"These unwanted tents which would have gone to landfill have now been shipped to the Philippines to give much needed shelter to those left homeless," he added.

Choir seeks newcomers

A RUGELEY choir is on the lookout for new members.

St Augustine's Church Choir is seeking new recruits of all ages and voices. A new group of children and adults are expected to join in January, so practice night could be changed.

For more information or to register an interest, contact organist and choir-master Paul Geoghegan 01785 713419 or at paul@musicmakers.demon.co.uk

Walk then lunch

A TRADITIONAL Christmas walk, followed by a pub grub, is on the cards for the Chase & District Group Ramblers this weekend. The eight-mile walk, in Burntwood and surrounding areas, takes place on Sunday (December 22). Departure time is 9am from Hednesford rail station car park, Anglesey Street.

Improvement notices served on health trust

THREE improvement notices have been served on the trust which runs Stafford Hospital after an investigation into the death of a patient.

The Health and Safety Executive launched the inquiry after the death of Edith Bourne in July.

Maternity unit given a vote of confidence

MOTHERS have given a vote of confidence to Stafford Hospital's closure-threatened maternity unit in a survey.

The department, which could close under plans to shake up services, was given a score of 173.1 out of a possible 200.

Women were asked a series of different questions covering 20 topics, including communication with patients and partners, and compassion shown by staff.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust scored 109.8. The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust was rated at 171.1. The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust achieved 166.3 and Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust was scored 162.3.

Anne Mellor, head of midwifery at Stafford Hospital, said: "We are thrilled with these results. It's great to know patients are so positive about our service, and the survey helps us to identify areas where we can improve."

Results taken from 152 patients showed Stafford Hospital received its highest score of 9.7 out of 10 for partners being involved as much as they wanted in the birth.

She had been transferred to Stafford's A&E department from Cannock Chase Hospital. The 84-year-old later died at Stafford's Acute Medical Unit.

Bosses at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust have now been ordered to address failings in managing the risk of falls, and arrangements for exchanging and recording patient information. The trust must comply with the orders by February 14 or risk prosecution.

Trust chief executive Maggie Oldham says she has started an internal review 'to make sure that we have robust systems and practices in place to ensure we are not putting patients at risk'.

Compliant

"The trust was served with three improvement notices on November 14. These relate to falls risk assessment, documentation and handover," she said.

"We have a three-month period to demonstrate that we are compliant and not in breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act."

"We have been in contact with the family so they are aware of the situation and we have apologised for the shortcomings in the care provided."

Kevin Hegarty, senior press officer for the Health and Safety Executive, said: "HSE has served the notices to address issues identified during this investigation."

"The notices set out what remedial action is necessary and a deadline for its completion is February 14."

Savile artwork condemned



The portrait of Jimmy Savile that has caused controversy at South Staffs College

COLLEGE bosses say a controversial painting depicting child sex predator Jimmy Savile as a knight in shining armour will be used in debates to educate students about artistic freedom.

South Staffordshire College has been criticised for displaying the artwork on an exhibition wall at its Lichfield campus. It has since been taken down.

Chief executive principal Graham Morley said the comments on social media websites had been 'overwhelmingly supportive' of the painting.

"We shall use the debate that the work has stimulated to engage our senior level learners with some of the key issues relating to artistic freedom and the creative process in the context of a society that is both free and accountable," he said.

Councillor Eric Drinkwater said: "In view of that man's history I think putting the painting up was disgraceful."

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Plea over cap on benefits

CANNOCK Chase MP Aidan Burley has called for the overall benefits cap to be lowered to mirror the post-tax amount of an average earner in his constituency.

The Government has introduced a £26,000 nationwide cap so no out-of-work household can claim more in benefits than the average family takes home by going out to work.

Mr Burley feels the cap, the equivalent of £35,000 before tax, is still far too generous for many across the country earning much less than this.

Setting

Addressing the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg at Prime Minister's Questions, Mr Burley said: "While any benefit cap is better than none at all, many people here do not feel that setting the cap at £26,000 goes far enough, particularly as the average salary in Cannock Chase is much less than this."

"Their average earnings are £23,900 a year before tax and the cap is set at the equivalent of an annual salary of £35,000 a year."

The Deputy Prime Minister and Liberal Democrat Leader said he was sure the vast majority of people in the country would think the current cap was fair.

Print firm jobs boost

JOBS are being created at a printing firm after a planned £1.5 million investment.

Family-run company KJB Print is installing new cutting-edge printers, binders and laminators at its Cannock headquarters over the next 18 months.

The firm has been operating for 20 years. Up to three posts are being created and will be taken on at the premises in Burdock Close, Hawks Green, in March.

Commercial director Stephen Egerton said: "We've undergone a major business transformation following heavy investment in digital printing."

Homeless help

A CANNOCK club raised £1,000 for the Sifa Fireside charity which will pay for sleeping bags for the homeless. St Mary's, in Hallcourt Lane, raised the money through a host of activities. Sifa is based in Birmingham and looks to tackle homelessness and alcohol misuse.

Wildlife charity in call over rare insect



A holly leaf miner taken at the Wolseley Centre base of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, courtesy of Craig Slawson

THE county's leading nature conservation charity is encouraging people to check their holly bushes this Christmas for a species of fly which makes its home on the inside of leaves.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is appealing for sightings of the holly leaf miner, otherwise known as Phytomyza ilicis, a fly whose larvae burrow into leaves of holly trees leaving characteristic pale trails, or leaf mines.

The maggot-like, legless larvae feed within the leaves forming the characteristic blotch mines, usually only one per leaf. Craig Slawson, ecological records

co-ordinator at Staffordshire Ecological Record, who are based at the Trust's Wolseley Centre HQ, said: "The holly leaf miner fly, which is harmless to humans, is probably common, but seriously under-recorded in Staffordshire, therefore we would be pleased to receive any sighting, giving location, date and preferably with a photo to increase our knowledge of its locations."

The adult holly leaf miner is a small black fly belonging to the family Agromyzidae. It is the only species of leaf-miner recorded on holly in Britain.

It was photographed at the Trust's Wolseley Centre HQ earlier in the month.

Staffordshire Ecological Record maintains a database of all records of wildlife species in the county, with the database currently holding almost 2 million records.

Sightings can be submitted online at www.staffs-ecology.org.uk or via email at records@staffs-ecology.org.uk

For more information contact Staffordshire Ecological Record on 01889 880127.

Forget about Price Tag as Jessie J in forest concert

Festive tunes shared

THE Christmas spirit was alive and well at a nursing home in Cannock where children gave a concert to elderly residents.

Youngsters from Chase Stage Academy sang carols and acted at the Abbey Court Nursing Home, in Heath Way, Heath Hayes, last Sunday (December 15).

The children aged eight to 13 were showcasing pieces from a performance they had given the day earlier at Chase Grammar School.

Teacher Charlotte Pearson said: "It just seemed like a nice gesture at Christmas, and the residents appeared to really enjoy it."

Pupils also performed drama pieces from Joseph And the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

The group, which takes youngsters from the age of six to 16, has performed at the O2 Arena in London. They have also shown off their talents at Her Majesty's Theatre and hope to have a number of high-profile performances lined up for next year.

The dance academy is holding a taster session at Chase Grammar School on January 11 between 1.30pm and 4.30pm.

Call Charlotte on 07534 288274.



Resident Betty Keeling with, Stage Academy director Charlotte Pearson, Grace Nellist, Kirsty Lerchundi, Mia Rowley, Olivia Wrench, Francesca Randall and Megan Brevitt

POP princess Jessie J will perform in Cannock Chase as part of the forest concerts next year.

The Voice judge is the first artist to sign up for the Forest Live gig at the beauty spot on June 27.

Forest Live is organised by the Forestry Commission. It sees big names play in beauty spots around the UK, with revenue from ticket sales ploughed into improving the woodland.

The popstar said: "I made my Forest Live debut this summer with just one show, which I loved, so it's great to be taking in another four Forest Live dates next year."

Domino

The singer - whose real surname is Cornish - released her first single Do It Like a Dude in 2011. Since then she has gone on to sell 11 million songs and 2.5m albums worldwide, with other big-selling singles including Who's Laughing Now, Domino, Price Tag, Wild and It's My Party.

The 25-year-old has been a judge on BBC talent show The Voice for the past two years alongside will.i.am, Tom Jones and The Script's Danny O'Donoghue.

The Cannock forest concerts began in 2006 and have featured the likes of Erasure, Jools Holland, the Sugababes, Paul Weller and Simple Minds. Earlier this year Blondie and Paloma Faith performed. More than 10,000 music lovers bought tickets for the music extravaganza.

Tickets were going on sale from 9am today (Thursday) at a cost of £42.90, including £3.90 booking fee. Call the Forestry Commission box office on 03000 680400 or buy online at www.forestry.gov.uk/music

Jessie is also performing at Forest Live concerts at Sherwood Pines Forest in Nottinghamshire, Bedbury Pinetum in Kent and Delamere Forest in Cheshire.

Charity ball raises £859

A CHARITY ball at a Cannock hotel raised more than £850 for Help for Heroes. The event was held at the Roman Way Hotel, on Watling Street on November 6 and a total of £859.77 was generated. Organisers thanked all those involved, including raffle prize donors. Among them were Fat Burner boot camp, Dream Hair, The Gatehouse Theatre, Grand Theatre, Cineworld, Pizza Hut, Wolves and Birmingham City FC, National Forest Adventure Farm, DC Leisure, Drayton Manor and the Co-Op.

NEWS in brief

Promotions firm in line for award

A HEDNESFORD firm is in line for a top prize in the 2014 Business Networking Awards.

Chase Promotions Ltd has reached the final four in the category of promotion/events business of the year. The ceremony, takes place at Drayton Manor on March 1. The Midlands finalists have been judged on service, profits, future aspirations and charity/community involvement.

Chase Promotions owner Darrell Mawle said: "It's great to be recognised in this way especially as we will reach the milestone of 10 years in business next month."

For more details on the business, visit www.chasepromotions.co.uk

Pupil funding is welcomed by MP

CHASE MP Aidan Burley has welcomed Government funding for disadvantaged pupils to help them achieve their full potential.

Whitehall has increased pupil premium and those in Cannock Chase will receive £3,658m, equal to £900 for each disadvantaged child, with an additional payment of £53 for primary school pupils.

In 2014-15, funding will rise to £2.5bn with £1,300 for primary-aged pupils, £935 for secondary school students and £1,900 for all those either looked after, adopted or with guardians.

Mr Burley said: "This is excellent news."

Singing of carols around huge tree

CAROLS will be sung around a huge Christmas tree at a church tonight (Thursday).

The festive evening starts at St John's Parish Church in Heath Hayes at 6.45pm.

The 19ft tree is being put up outside the church in Hednesford Road.

Mince pies and mulled wine will be served to guests.

There will also be collections for the charities Midlands Air Ambulance, Acorns Children's Hospice and Help for Heroes.

Christmas Eve blood session

DONORS can give blood in Heath Hayes next week. NHS Blood & Transplant will be at the Constitutional Club, Hednesford Road, on Christmas Eve (December 24).

To make an appointment, from 10am to 2pm, call 0300 123 23 23.



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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



SCIENTISTS in China are reported to be developing technology that can make objects seemingly disappear. I can't see that working, can you?

FROM this week's report on plump schoolchildren, we learn that a trustee of the National Obesity Forum is a Mr Fry.

THE official version of the Mandela story, parroted unquestioningly by the Western media, is that he was adored by all his people and that he created a free and equal South Africa committed to democracy. So why were there tens of thousands of empty seats at the FNB football stadium on Tuesday? And why did the crowd stand and cheer that bloody-handed old land-grabber and voter-rigger, Robert Mugabe? You might easily form the opinion that now the national father-figure with his message of forgiveness and reconciliation has passed on, some South Africans are itching to try Comrade Mugabe's policy of simply grabbing the white man's riches.

I THOUGHT at the time that the chap doing the deaf sign language at the Mandela memorial ceremony looked a bit worried. Now we learn that Thamsanqa Jantjie's "signing" was gibberish. It makes me wonder how much of the signing we see on British telly is 100 per cent accurate. They do seem to cram an awful lot of words into one or two hand gestures. You know the sort of thing. The newsreader says: "Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague today returned from a five day conference on science and technology in Uzbekistan" and in the corner of your screen, the signer puts up three fingers, touches his nose and tweaks his ear. So which bit of that was "Uzbekistan"?

IF I enter a mosque I remove my shoes. If I go into a synagogue I cover my head with a kippa. When you enter the premises of another faith or culture, it is common courtesy to respect their ways. And when extremist religious speakers enter British universities they should accept the customs of their hosts. But Universities UK seriously suggests that audiences might be segregated, with men and women sitting apart, if a fundamentalist speaker requested it. UUK which bills itself as "the definitive voice for universities in the UK," should be ashamed of itself. Apartheid was demolished in South Africa and segregation was defeated in the States. The idea of reintroducing something similar in British universities to placate some sexually-confused throwbacks who'd be happier living in the 7th century is revolting.

SO HOW do you deal with an organisation which attempts to sexually segregate an audience on religious grounds? I'm with the emailer who suggests men should whisper earnestly to the stewards: "My religion says I must sit with females."

CHRISTMAS is usually a great time for animal charities to produce photos of their most adorable creatures and rattle the collecting tin. But how on earth can any dog, cat or donkey sanctuary compete against 100 baby seals washed up in last week's tidal surge and now being cared for at the RSPCA's East Winch Wildlife Centre? These pups are the ookey-snookumy sweetest little things you have ever seen, a heart-tugging cross between Bambi and the Little Mermaid, all wide-eyed, shiny-nosed, mewling for bottled milk and trying to suckle the TV camera lens. That's where the Christmas charity cheques will go. Signed, sealed and delivered.

ONE woman plucked pure, heavenly magic from a Celtic harp. Another seemed to be trying to extort a tune from an oven-ready turkey, which turned out to be a primitive bagpipe. I am just back from a thoroughly uplifting evening of medieval music with Joglearesa, a five-piece band performing the sort of music our families enjoyed 20 generations ago. It was the perfect start to yuletide.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Digging in to create outdoor area

HORTICULTURE students are digging in to help create an outdoor and garden area for a school near Penkridge.

The Level 1 horticulture students from South Staffordshire College's Rodbaston Campus are working on the project for children at St Leonards CE First School in Dunston.

The school had new buildings put up in the summer and along with the necessary clearing up work it was decided to provide an outdoor area for the children to appreciate and enjoy.

Students are involved in a wide range of

improvements, including slab laying, moving sheds, re-siting and digging out a new pond, fencing and the creation of raised beds and planters. The installation of play areas will complete the makeover.

St Leonards has permanent eco-school status and its environmental work has included a cultivated garden, a wild garden and pond for pupils to enjoy. Judith Smythe, the high level teaching assistant responsible for the children's outdoor activities, said: "I can't speak highly enough of the students."



Students prepare the outdoor area at St Leonards

Out-of-date medicine found in surgery probe

INSPECTORS have uncovered a catalogue of failings at some GP practices in Staffordshire, including one where medicine was found to be out of date.

The Care Quality Commission health regulator carried out inspections at 1,000 practices across England and found examples of 'very poor care' that put patients at risk.

While many received an excellent service, a third of surgeries failed to meet at least one of the required standards on good practice and protecting patients.

Bideford Way Surgery in Bideford Way, Cannock, was told to improve its management of medicines.

Vaccines

The CQC report stated: "Medicines were not kept safely. We saw there were systems in place to ensure that regularly used vaccines were stored in a locked fridge at the correct temperature but these were not always followed."

"We saw that one medicine had expired two months ago but had not been removed or replaced."

Surgery bosses said the issue there had been addressed immediately following the CQC visit.

The levels of care, treatment and support to meet people's needs require improvement at Chads Moor Medical Practice in Princess Street, Chads Moor, according to the inspectors. They

by Laura Blyth

found 'appropriate arrangements' were not in place to deal with 'foreseeable emergencies'.

"We saw that there was limited emergency medical equipment kept at the practice," the report.

In nine practices in England, "there were very serious failings that could potentially affect thousands of people", the CQC said, and in 90 practices follow-up inspections had to be ordered to ensure improvements were made.

Browning Street Surgery in Browning Street, Stafford, was told it needed to improve in several areas.

Inspectors found that some staff had not been given safeguarding training for children or vulnerable adults.

In one of the worst-performing practices, inspectors found maggots and dirty conditions, while in another, consulting rooms had no doors and people could hear what was being said to the GP.

Victorian market success

OPERATORS have announced their delight at the success of its annual Victorian Christmas Market. The owners of Penkridge Market said they were thrilled at the turnout to the event on November 29.

It featured more than 100 food and craft stalls, as well as a wide range of entertainment, including a funfair, Father Christmas and a fire-eater.

Matt Williams, manager of Penkridge Market, said he was delighted the event seemed to grow year on year.

He said: "The Victorian Christmas Market is always a great event, but this year was busier than ever before. There was a fantastic atmosphere and it was great to see the market so busy."

Museum celebrates hat-trick



Celebrating the hat-trick of awards for the Museum of Cannock Chase' in Valley Road, Hednesford, are, from left, manager Lee Bellingham, Councillor Chris Mitchell, visitor services assistant Sarah Challinor and visitor services officer Nicola Bannister

STAFF at a top Chase tourist attraction are celebrating after receiving accolades from three different national organisations.

The museum, in Valley Road, Hednesford, has been named a 'quality assured visitor attraction' following an assessment by Visit England, and has also picked up prestigious heritage education accolade The Sandford Award for the fourth time.

In addition, the Arts Council has once again given the facility Museums Accreditation, which demonstrates its commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment and benefit of users.

Lee Bellingham, manager of the museum,

located at the former Valley Colliery site, said: "A lot of hard work goes on to producing engaging activities to educate and inspire our visitors, and it is wonderful to have this recognition."

Delighted

Councillor Christine Mitchell, portfolio leader for leisure and culture, also welcomed the hat-trick of approval.

She said: "I am delighted and very proud that our local museum has received these accolades."

"We are lucky to have a quality attraction in the district."

Pet food appeal is launched by vets

A GREAT Wyrley vets is collecting donations of pet food to support homeless pets at Christmas.

The 387 Veterinary Centre in Walsall Road is collecting for the Cannock branch of Cats Protection and Sunnyside Kennels in Coven. Food will be distributed to the charities in the new year.

"We see so many loved and cherished pets here at 387 Vets," said vet and practice owner Hamish Duncan.

"We wanted to support less fortunate companion animals and one of our registered veterinary nurses, Sharon Carter, suggested the 'give a pet a dinner this Christmas' idea."

Biscuits

"The two charities we're collecting for rely on donations from the public, and giving food was one way we felt we could help."

The practice is inviting anyone to support the initiative, and put a can - or bag of pet biscuits - in the collection bin in its reception area. Hamish added: "It's a great opportunity for local people to help feed abandoned or injured cats needing new homes, or to give one of up to 100 dogs cared for at Sunnyside a little Christmas cheer."

Activity club for children

AN activity club for youngsters during the February half-term takes place at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mount Road, Etching Hill.

It will be an all-day event on Friday, February 21 from 9am to 3.30pm at a cost of £5 per child and £4 per sibling.

A packed lunch will be needed. The day is open to all at primary school and will provide a range of activities with a particular emphasis on making things to bring home.

Places will need to be booked in advance with Sue Whitehouse 01889 800939.

Bad Rats concert

LOCAL Irish influenced band The Bad Rats are having their Christmas party gig at the Longford Social Club, Wellington Drive, Cannock, next Friday, December 27. Doors open at 7.30pm and there will be a late bar. Admission is £2.

Wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

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Food and crafts up for grabs

PENKRIDGE Market stages a fine food & craft market this weekend. It will be open from 9am to 3.30pm on Saturday (December 21).

Admission and parking is free and there will be a wide variety of stalls selling goods such as Christmas presents and trees, Brussels sprouts and wreaths. There will also be carols from the local school choir and music from the Salvation Army band.

Local farms will be selling meat, poultry and fresh game, as well as the traditional fruit and veg stalls. There will be a wide range of local produce on sale, from cheeses, breads and olives, to homemade cakes, pies and preserves.

Festive

Craft stalls will range from handbags and jewellery, to clothes, watches and antiques, plus hand-made chocolates, fudge and toffees.

There will also be a variety of catering stalls and the Old Deane Farm Cafe will serve hot drinks and festive food, including a traditional turkey lunch with all the trimmings.

On Monday, December 23, the market will host a 'poultry sale' of dressed turkeys, ducks, chickens and geese.

For further information call 01785 714221 or log onto www.penkridgemarlet.co.uk

Shop team wins award

CANNOCK Shopping Centre's management team has been rewarded for its efforts.

The 2013 GVA Client Team of the Year award went to Natal Chapman and her team at Cannock as well as Brendan Webb at Merseyway Shopping Centre, in Stockport, Anne Gilgrass at Swinton, Manchester and the team at Cherry Tree Shopping Centre, Wallasey, Merseyside led by John White.

They beat off competition from other GVA-run shopping centres to win the award.

GVA manages 26 shopping centres across the UK.

Coffee morning

A COFFEE morning is being held at St John's Church, Slitting Mill on New Year's Day. The events take place on the first Wednesday of the month at 11am. Cost is £2 to include a drink and biscuits or cake. There will also be a raffle and bric-a-brac sale.

Vandal who daubed graffiti on buildings jailed



The vandalised Calf Heath Methodist Church

A VANDAL has been locked up after daubing graffiti on the windows and doors of 15 businesses during a one-man crime spree.

Kieran Morley, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to 14 charges of criminal damage between November 8-10, and one charge of theft.

The court heard the 44-year-old struck at a string of businesses in Staffordshire before handing in a note to police confessing.

Ms Abigail Hall, prosecuting, said: "On November 8, a trustee at Calf Heath village hall was notified of random patterns which had been sprayed on windows. At Cheryl's

Flower House and Washeteria launderette in Glenthorne Drive, Great Wyrley there were also squiggles on the windows and doors.

"Red spray paint was found at Dazzling Dogs Salon on Walsall Road, Great Wyrley. The manager was able to get the majority of the paint off but some of it is still visible.

"Graffiti was discovered on the doors, windows and renderings of Calf Heath Methodist Church. There were lots of scribbles which have been removed but some of it still remains on the rendering.

"On November 11 the defendant attended Cannock Police Station and handed in a note which said he had been

shoplifting and had sprayed paint on premises in the area."

Mr Mark Hemming, defending, said Morley became homeless in 2007 after falling out with his family. Morley was sentenced to 16 weeks in prison.

Joyce Bromley, 76, a member of Calf Heath Methodist Church, said: "We can't get the paint off the chapel.

"We had a new door fitted at the start of the year which cost us £1,200 but it has been completely ruined with paint."

Chris Turner, manager of Washeteria, added: "It is just senseless. It is hard enough for small businesses to make a living without having to worry about this."

Store owner: I've cleaned up act after breach of hygiene

A SHOP owner vowed he has cleaned up his act after he was fined more than £4,000 for his first breach of hygiene rules in a decade.

Lawrence Duckhouse, owner of West End Wines in Anson Street, Rugeley, said the business was now 'maintained to a very high standard'.



West End Wines, Rugeley

He was taken to court by Cannock Chase Council following an October 2012 inspection after officers discovered 'dirty and greasy surfaces, filthy equipment, mouse activity and food at risk of contamination'.

Mr Duckhouse says his shop now no longer makes food on site - and that this was his first and only problem.

"I have had just one complaint over the last 10 years which I would consider to be a sign of fantastic service," Mr Duckhouse said.

Greasy

"At the time of the inspection both my staff and myself would clean the surfaces before preparing food and all staff were qualified. We no longer make food here and the shop is maintained to a very high standard."

Environmental health officer for the council, Natalie Barrow, said: "An inspection of the shop in October 2012 revealed a number of serious food hygiene issues, including dirty and greasy surfaces, filthy equipment, mouse activity, food at risk of contamination, gnawed food and dirty touch points."

"A total of 13 mice were caught in a six day period. The shop remains open and is fully complying with the necessary regulations."

As a result of his breaches last year, Mr Duckhouse was fined £4,192 by Stafford Magistrates Court when he appeared before them on December 4.

Justice secretary has faith in Oakwood



The Secretary of State for Justice Chris Grayling talking to students at Willenhall E ACT Academy

JUSTICE Secretary Chris Grayling says he has every confidence that troubled Oakwood prison will be able to turn its fortunes around.

The Conservative MP visited Staffordshire and the Black Country last week, dropping in on Cannock Police Station as well as Willenhall E-ACT Academy.

HMP Oakwood in Featherstone - the UK's biggest prison with 1,600 inmates - has been dubbed 'Jokewood' after a damning report listed a string of criticisms over its performance.

Inmates have staged two roof-top protests at the privately run prison in

the space of just months, the latest being at the end of last month. Extra fencing and CCTV is also being installed at the prison to stop an influx of drug-filled tennis balls being thrown over the walls into exercise yards.

Facility

But Mr Grayling defended the 'super-prison', saying: "We have to remember every new prison - public or private - takes a while to get embedded in. Oakwood is a really good facility. I'm sure they will get things sorted out. I'm confident it will be good."

Shadow Justice Secretary Sadiq

Khan previously called for G4S, which runs Oakwood, to be removed if improvements are not made in six months.

Mr Grayling also commented during his visit on proposals to increase MPs' pay by 1.1 per cent, saying: "We have all said it's not appropriate for MPs to have a big rise."

At Willenhall E-ACT Academy in Furzebank Way, Mr Grayling spoke to law students from the Sixth Form about his role in Parliament.

At Cannock police station in Wolverhampton Road, he met Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley.

NEWS

in brief

Concerns over care on increase

THE number of concerns raised about the care of vulnerable people in Staffordshire has soared by 20 per cent in a year.

There were 3,962 referrals to Staffordshire County Council within 12 months - 64 per cent involving people over 65.

Figures show there has been an ongoing increase in 'adult protection' referrals in Staffordshire.

In 2012/13, 3,962 there were 3,055 referrals, an increase of 20 per cent on the previous financial year. Some 73 per cent of those referrals met the threshold for further investigation.

Fluorescent vest gifts for children

A RUGELEY opticians is ensuring children will be safe and be seen when out and about.

Specsavers in Upper Brook Street, has donated 100 high-visibility vests to children at Chancel and Croft Primary schools. They will ensure the pupils can be clearly seen when walking to and from school or on school trips.

Store director Minal Naik said: "With the dark winter mornings and early evenings, it's important that children can be seen clearly."

Ploughing on as machine is given

A SNOW plough has been donated to a memorial for the country's war dead ahead of predicted heavy snow this winter.

The £3,000 machine has been presented to the National Memorial Arboretum, near Lichfield, by Croft Landscapes of Cannock.

Business owner Barry Jones has been the main grounds maintenance contractor at the Arboretum since it opened more than 10 years ago.

Deputy curator James Shallcross said: "The snow plough will make a tremendous difference this winter."

Expansion plan on street market

A WEEKLY street market could be introduced in neighbouring towns if a newly launched venture in Cannock is a success.

The market in Cannock town centre is being trialled for a period of six months and if deemed a success, it could be rolled out to Hednesford and Rugeley.

Rugeley
foodbank



Today in Rugeley and surrounding areas there are families struggling to put food on the table. For people on low incomes, a sudden crisis - redundancy, benefit delay or even an unexpected bill - can mean going hungry. Every day parents skip meals to feed their children and people are forced to choose between paying the rent and eating. Rugeley foodbank provides emergency food and support to local people in crisis.

Rugeley Foodbank has now been in operation for 17 months, our key achievement since opening has been engaging the whole community in providing food for local people going hungry.

In total, to date, we have given out food to 1068 beneficiaries (664 adults and 404 children) from Rugeley and surrounding areas.

Food is available by obtaining vouchers from professional agencies including: Doctors, Health Workers, Hospitals, Social Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Probation Service, Schools and Church leaders.

Opening times: Tuesday and Friday 2pm until 4pm

Address: Rugeley Foodbank, Rugeley Community Church, Frank Rogers Walk, Rugeley, WS15 2YP

Contact: tel: 07528 447504

Email: info@rugeley.foodbank.org.uk



NEWS

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

MOST bizarre story of the last week comes courtesy of Birmingham City Council, which will in future be requiring buskers to go through an audition process before they are allowed to ply their trade outside Snow Hill station.

I can see where the good burghers of Brum are coming from. I once worked in an office where the summer months meant a daily choice between stifling humidity, or opening a window directly above the wailing banshee on the street below. Usually we opted for stifling humidity, air fresheners were cheaper than earplugs.

But since when did local government become a leading authority on musical talent? You can imagine them now, all sat around the committee room table, sucking on their spectacles.

"Councillor Benson, you've got the high-waisted trousers, you can be Simon Cowell. Mr Jackson, you've done a few shifts on hospital radio, you're Louis Walsh."

"Oh, and Betty. You're good with the tea and biscuits, and your old man's a driving instructor, isn't he? Do you fancy being that bird with the funny name?"

"Great, all sorted. So tell us Mr Millichip, why are you here?"

HEARTWARMING tale about the 97-year-old Sid Ratcliffe, who married 90-year-old Iris Law at Wolverhampton Register Office last week.

There are probably cynics around who will say that the age gap is too big, and that Sid was looking for a young trophy wife. But wisely, the couple have been courting since 2001, so they haven't rushed into it.

You know they must have something special when they can bring a smile to the face of even a curmudgeonly old cynic like myself. Can't wait for the golden wedding.

THE report about the maggots at the doctor's surgery in Nottingham is horrifying, but equally I do think we place far too much emphasis on the fabric of buildings when it comes to the NHS.

Years ago, when I went to my GP, it would be in a small, slightly shabby surgery, where you could get an appointment in the evening, and you stood a good chance of seeing the same doctor every time you went.

Then along came a spot of the fabled 'investment', and the old surgery made way for a shiny new mini-clinic with a spacious waiting room, baby-changing facilities, specialist treatment rooms and around 20 staff. Last time I tried to make an appointment I was told it would have to be the following week - and I had no idea who I would see. I think I preferred things the way they were.

Follow me on Twitter MANDrews_Star



Father Christmas greets Oliver Marple at the Birches Valley grotto in Rugeley



Santa, Lisa Walker and daughter Tahliya, aged two, in the Merry Hill grotto



Betty Green, aged six, meets Santa in his grotto at Sandwell Park Farm



Harry, three and Abigail, nine, Cyster meet Santa at the Victorian Arcade

It's a lotta grotto fun as children enjoy Santa visit

NOTHING says Christmas quite like a trip to Santa's grotto. Excited youngsters flock to see Father Christmas and tell him exactly what they want on the big day.

Increasing numbers of attractions across now offer their own Santa's grottos.

Some, like at Staffordshire's Shugborough Hall, are so popular that tickets to see Santa sell out weeks in advance. Others see queues build up of youngsters eager to pass on their wish lists.

For children, it is often one of the highlights of the festive period.

Some grottos offer youngsters a small memento of their visit, while others give children the chance to have their pictures taken with the man in the red suit. Shops and department stores first started offering their own grottos more than a century ago.

The tradition of Santa making special appearances at department stores and shopping centres in the run up to Christmas was started by James Edgar who introduced it in 1890 to his Massachusetts department store.

Glimpse

The practice was first seen in Great Britain in 1879 before spreading the following year to Australia and America.

It is believed the first ever department store Christmas grotto was in Liverpool at the Lewis's Bon Marche store, which opened as 'Christmas Fairyland' in 1879.

Today, it is commonplace for department stores to have their own grottos.

Set within the 11th century Dudley Castle, a visit to the grotto at the town's zoo also includes a glimpse inside Sleeping Beauty's Palace.

Before meeting Father Christmas, children can look around the castle, which has been transformed with an animal forest, an antique spinning wheel and Princess Beauty asleep in a bed. Visitors are greeted by an elf before being taken into a warm room to meet the big man and receive a special gift.

Following the visit, families can view a glow in the dark puppet show before seeing the zoo's many animals.

Among the visitors so far are pupils and teachers from Lightwoods Primary



Santa in the grotto at Dudley Zoo and Castle with Lightwoods Primary pupils



At the Mander Centre grotto are Shayla-Mai Bratt, aged two, and dad John

School in Oldbury. Reception teacher Sarah Cawtheray said: "I think it is a great grotto for the children to visit and get presents to take home."

Youngsters can sit alongside Santa on a small chair while they make their wishlist, or on request, can sit on his lap to have their pictures taken.

The grotto is open from 10am to 3.30pm every day. Tickets are purchased for 30-minute time slots. For children, it costs £9.50. For adults, it is £6.50.

A family ticket for two adults and two children costs £28.

At Merry Hill, the adventure takes

£4.95 per child and £12 for two adults with two children.

The children's fee includes a 50p charity donation to 'Help Harry Help Others'. The grotto is open on Saturdays from 10am to 7pm; Sundays from 10.30am to 5pm; weekdays until December 18 from 10am to 8pm; December 19, 20, 21 and 23 from 10am to 9pm and Christmas Eve from 9am to 5pm.

A wooden chalet-style grotto at Wolverhampton's Mander Centre is nestled on the bottom floor of the shopping centre. Among those who queued to pay him a visit was eight-year-old Blade Wrauxton, who said: "Santa was really nice. I give it 10 out of 10."

Santa charges £4.25 for a present, £4 for a photo and £8 for a present and photo.

Set in the picturesque Cannock Chase, this grotto offers an authentic woodland.

Young children are given a Christmas tree sapling to plant as well as a soft toy. Reindeer can also be found close by, grazing in their forest enclosure.

Reindeer

Angela Marple, who took sons Oliver and Joshua along with husband Nathan said: "We think it is the best grotto in the Midlands. It looks a bit like Lapland without the snow."

Entry costs £6 per child and on Friday from 4pm to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

A wintery wonderland of penguins, polar bears and reindeer greet visitors to Santa's grotto at Sandwell Park Farm.

One of the first things children spy is a sleigh, which leads into Santa's workshop where they can meet the man himself and receive a gift.

Entry costs £6 on top of the normal £1.90 admission fee for adults and £1.40 for children. The grotto is open every weekend until December 22 from 10am to 4.30pm. Group bookings are available by calling 0121 553 0220.

Father Christmas sits on a huge gold-coloured chair as he greets children at the Victorian Arcade in Bradford Street, Walsall. An empty unit at the shopping centre has been transformed into a festive wonderland, with decorations and stockings lining the walls.

The Winter Wonderland is located between The Works and Acorns Charity Shop. Entry is £2.50 per child.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

WOLVERHAMPTON Grand Theatre had welcomed 80,000 people through its doors since the three months since it reopened. Chairman of the theatre board Geoffrey Norman said it had helped bring people into the city centre at night, and dispelled the myth that it was a 'no-go' area after dark.

A VICAR scrapped most of the Christmas celebrations at his church in protest at the modern trappings of the festive season. Christ Church in Lye would have no Nativity play or carol service, announced vicar Rev Graham Cooper, instead focusing on special New Year's Day services.

MEANWHILE, Father Christmas nearly failed to turn up for a function at an old people's home in Oldbury because a bus driver left him stranded.

1993...

BRITISH Prime Minister John Major and his Eire counterpart Albert Reynolds were on the brink of signing an historic declaration designed to bring peace to Northern Ireland. The agreement would pave the way for Sinn Féin being allowed to take part in talks on the future of Ulster - to the fury of many Unionists.

THREE Britons were freed from prison by Saddam Hussein following the intervention of former prime minister Sir Edward Heath. The men had been given long sentences for illegally entering Iraq, but the British Government insisted no deals had been done to secure their release.

THE threat of fascism hung over Russia after the far-right Liberal Democrats achieved the biggest share of the vote in the parliamentary elections, taking 70 seats.

2003...

DEPOSED Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was finally captured by US forces after eight months on the run. The dishevelled-looking dictator was shown on television, sporting a long, grey beard, but was said to be in good health. Saddam had not been seen since the invasion led by British and American forces in April.

The jury in the Soham murder trial was sent out to consider its verdict. Ian Huntley, a 29-year-old school caretaker, denied murdering 10-year-olds Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. His fiancée, Maxine Carr, a 26-year-old classroom assistant, denied conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

VETERAN rocker Mick Jagger was at Buckingham Palace to receive his knighthood - but in the true spirit of rock 'n' roll rebellion, he wore trainers with his lounge suit.

Open Events

Pre-School & Juniors:
Friday 31 January
9.30am-11.30am

Middle & Seniors:
Friday 7 February
9.30am-11.30am

Sixth Form:
Tuesday 11 February
6.30pm-8.30pm

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NEWS

Couple commemorate their golden years



Jean and Barry Whitmore toast 50 years of marriage

A WALSALL-born couple have 50 reasons to enjoy a Merry Christmas – they celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary just a few days before.

Barry Whitmore and Jean Booth met in 1962. Jean, from Goscote, said she was heading back home through Pelsall after returning from a coach trip.

She met a friend coming out of the Dolphin pub and he was with his friend Barry, who was on leave from the Forces.



The couple on their wedding day in December 1963

"Everywhere I went after that he seemed to be there," she said.

The pair wed at Christ Church, Blakenall Heath, on December 21, 1963 and have gone on to have two daughters and four grandchildren.

Barry, 74, is a retired bridlemaker, originally from Coalpool. Their secret? "Plenty of give and take and to always listen," he said.

World Cup power deal

A COMPANY with its head offices in Cannock has won deals for next year's two major sporting events.

Temporary power supplier Aggreko, which runs its UK operations from its Cannock offices, has been contracted for the World Cup in Brazil and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

It follows Aggreko's success in providing the temporary power supply to the London 2012 Olympics.

Aggreko said it had also won a six

month 80 megawatt diesel power project in Panama. This will see it provide power as a licenced generator to the Panamanian wholesale electricity market.

Market

"This is, we believe, the first time that a temporary power supplier has entered a country's wholesale electricity market competing with permanent power generators," the company said.

The company said its results this year would be 'slightly' better than

expected. Underlying group revenues will be up around three per cent for the current year and trading profit around the same level as in 2012.

This strips out the impact of London 2012, the £140 million acquisition of Brazilian firm Poit Energia and price movements in fuel and currencies.

On a reported basis, revenues will be similar to last year, at £1.57bn, while pre-tax profit will be at least £335m. As a result of strong cash generation, net debt for the company will be £200m less than a year ago, below £400m.



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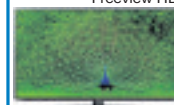
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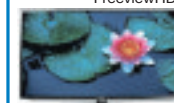
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LETTERS

Call for changes to road scheme

I AGREE with Roger White that the proposed reduction of road lanes at Horse Fair, Rugeley, needs altering.

Staffordshire Highways say the single lanes idea is towards a Government scheme to promote the use of public transport to town centres. We have lived in Rugeley since before it was pedestrianised. We walk into the town, past the train station, occasionally, and we find the present crossings at Horse Fair quite adequate.

To return home we use public transport, a bus from the station situated on the edge of the pedestrian area. Buses would be affected detrimentally by single lanes as most of the routes use the Globe roundabout.

Any problems in the temporary single lane road-works and the whole system is held up for all the roads onto Horse Fair.

ANNE MOSS
Draycot Park estate
Rugeley

Council chairman's festive wishes

THIS year the world has seen many disasters that have left towns, and even whole countries in devastation.

However, we have our own tragedies to contend with and Burntwood folk respond as they always do with all sorts of fundraising events.

Past chairmen and I have been asked to attend many of these events, and we are always taken aback by the amount of time and effort is put in by countless volunteers to help those in greater need than themselves. It is a pleasure for me

to be supporting two charities during my time as chairman and I am trying to organise a charity night.

This past year the town council has started its campaign to make the town more recognisable as an entity and not an offshoot of nearby towns. A new logo has been designed that will take us forward, yet acknowledging the villages, and is now being used on letter-headers and eventually bus shelters etc.

The highlight of the year for me was the unveiling of the SCAMP statue.

Sankeys Corner now has a focal point. Let us hope that many more events can happen there.

Please keep an eye on your elderly neighbours, don't let them be forgotten during the festivities.

I hope you have a lovely Christmas and the New Year should see things getting better. On behalf of all your Councillors and myself, I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

RON BRADBURY, Chairman
Burntwood Town Council

Confused over row at school

I MUST admit I find the dispute at Littleton Green School a little confusing.

Are parents up in arms about the 'ham-fisted' way in which headteacher Lynn Small handled the issue of the proposed religious workshop at Stafford University? Or are they angry about the objective of it? In which case may I suggest they at least give further consideration to this issue.

"Cross religious/cultural awareness" could be the key to unlocking intolerance and misunderstanding of other people's beliefs.

We owe our future generations the opportunity to live in a more peaceful co-existence in what will inevitably become an ever increasing multi-racial society.

But this can only be achieved if we allow the open-mindedness of today's youngsters to be exposed to new and alternative cultures in order that they can fully understand them and make up their own minds.

A KYTE
Great Wyrley

No longer the unit manager for St John

THANK you for the article and photograph in *The Chronicle* about my visit to the Paul O'Grady Show representing St John Ambulance (December 5). However, there was an error in the information. Although I was until June last year Unit Manager at Burntwood, that is no longer the case. I am Area Training Specialist for South Staffs but not, as the article states, in charge of the local Badgers and Cadets. The Burntwood Badgers are managed by Judy Oughton and the Burntwood Cadets by Ros Heron.

Any young people or adults interested in joining St John Ambulance should contact Regional HQ on 0121 237 3874 or consult the St John website - www.sja.org.uk.

CAROL TRIGG
Burntwood

A victory for people and common sense

AT this time of year it's right we give thanks. So I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the people of Cannock and the surrounding area for their support in forcing Cannock Council to scrap their controversial proposals to develop the Beecroft Road Car Park earlier this year.

Had this development gone ahead it would have meant the main car park for the town centre and the hospital disappearing; monies which could have been used to invest in the existing town centre would have instead been used to build unwanted cafes and restaurants; and many people in Allport Road could have lost their homes.

But, as a result of intense lobbying and the submission of a petition containing more than 2,500 signatures, this controversial scheme was eventually scrapped. This has been a victory for the people of Cannock and for common sense. It's a victory for all those who called upon the council to act in the people's interests and not their own. And it's a victory for all those who were willing to stand up for what was right.

ROBERT BLAIKIE, Allport Action Alliance

LETTERS

to the Editor

POST

Cannock & Rugeley Chronicle,
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Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

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Graveyard disgrace

RE: The Memorial garden at St John's Church, Heath Hayes. It was lovely for that family to find things had been tidied up in the memorial garden (*Chronicle*, November 28). However, if you go to the back of the church to the main graveyard it is a different matter. The grass is overgrown and there are bushes along the pathway that are overgrown. It is an absolute disgrace and it is upsetting for people that go to attend their loved one's grave.

L HUBBARD, Hednesford

Many thanks to all those people who have made Cannock Chase such a special place during 2013. Wishing you a Merry Christmas, and best wishes to everyone for the coming year.



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NEWS

Couple fail in appeal over fraud convictions

A MARRIED couple who conned almost £2 million from customers whose debts they claimed they could wipe out have failed in a bid to clear their names.

Basil Rankine and wife Amanda were the directors of Momentum Network Ltd, which traded as Credit Card Killer offering a debt-clearing service for a fee.

The couple, from Rugeley, were found guilty of fraud last year in a trial at Birmingham Crown Court, with Basil Rankine convicted of 10 counts and his wife, aged 38, of eight.

He was also found guilty of four counts of engaging in unfair commercial practice. His wife was convicted of three.

Unsafe

Basil Rankine, 48, was jailed for three years, while his wife was handed a suspended sentence, and both were banned from holding a directorship for seven years.

The pair, of Somerset Avenue, each challenged their convictions at London's Criminal Appeal Court, arguing they were 'unsafe' because of errors made during the trial process.

But, dismissing their appeals, Mrs Justice Thirlwall said the case against them was 'overwhelming'.

The court heard that the couple, as the directors and sole shareholders of Momentum Network Ltd, set up Credit Card Killer in July 2002.

She said CCK was advertised as a specialist firm which could help people by buying up their debts for a percentage fee. Officials seized files which indicated the firm had 2,000 customers



Fraudsters Basil and Amanda Rankine have failed to clear their names

and had made around £2m in fees. They illegally claimed they had cleared up the debts but creditors continued to chase their customers for money.

False

The couple's defence was that nothing had been said or done which was false or misleading and that each customer knew there was a risk involved.

Challenging their convictions, Mr Rankine claimed prosecutors had breached injunctions made in civil proceedings and his wife argued she should have had a separate trial and that the jury didn't deliberate for long enough before returning its verdicts.

But Mrs Justice Thirlwall said Mr Rankine's criticism was 'wholly misconceived' and a joint trial was fair.

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NEWS

County's primary schools slide down the rankings

PRIMARY schools in Staffordshire slipped down the national rankings after a shake-up of exam targets.

The county fell down the national league tables to 102 out of 152 local authorities this year, compared to 96 last year.

It comes after the decision to record reading and writing results separately for the first time in headline statistics.

Nationally, hundreds of primary schools are failing to give their pupils a decent education in reading, writing and arithmetic, the official figures suggest.

County councillor Ben Adams, said he was 'not happy' about Staffordshire's slip of six places in the league table.

Standards

But he insisted there had been no fall in primary education standards in the county, rather that the rate of improvement across the UK was faster than in Staffordshire.

The change in recording the results was made after claims under-11s were not being pushed hard enough, leaving them ill-prepared for secondary schooling.

By raising standards, it is hoped schools will improve pupils' performance although it means this year's statistics do not represent a like-for-like comparison with those from last year.

Across Staffordshire, 75 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above in reading, maths and writing. Last year, when the county was judged on just combined English and maths results – it achieved 79 per cent and in so doing, met the national average.

Councillor Adams said the county's hiring six months ago of an independent joint venture company Entrust to



Headteacher Tina Blankley with some of her staff and the breakfast club at Chancel Primary in Rugeley celebrating the school league tables

work to improve standards had yet to bear fruit. A new director of education and expert staff were starting in the new year, he said.

"The improvement across the country is to be welcomed. What I'm not particularly happy about is that we are not making similar progress," said Councillor Adams.

"However, we are putting in place the appropriate support to assist pupils and ensure they are able to take advantage of the excellent job opportunities there are in the county by the time they leave school."

There were some positives for Staffordshire, he said, with the number of good or outstanding schools rising from 60 to 71 per cent. Success stories included Chancel Primary School, Wolsley Road, Rugeley, which was ranked 16th across Staffordshire.

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NEWS

Santas cut a dash for annual fundraiser



Newlife's Sheila Brown starts the race with Aidan Burley and Peter Taunton



A Santa dashes through the park



A runner dressed for the occasion



Max Phillips, aged six, took part with parents Michelle and Steve, both 34

DOZENS of competitors dressed as Santa for an annual charity fun dash through Cannock.

More than 60 people of all ages took part in the fourth Newlife Foundation Santa Dash on Saturday (December 14). It raised around £3,000.

Representatives from Cannock Police, the Co-Op and Fitness First were joined by businessmen and members of the public from all walks of life. The one-mile dash was started by

Stafford Town Crier Peter Taunton from Chase Leisure Centre. It went around Cannock Park and finished in a sprint to the line at the bandstand in the town centre.

Sprinted

Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley donned a Santa suit to take part, finishing ninth in the race won by Alastair Payne from the bank bar and lounge. Mr Burley said: "I haven't

sprinted that fast for a long time but I had great fun."

Others taking part included disabled Max Phillips, aged six, from Nuneaton. He took delivery of a brand new R82 Cheetah wheelchair, donated by the Newlife Foundation, the day before.

His dad Steve, aged 34, said: "We have all enjoyed taking part. It is a fantastic cause."

Newlife CEO Sheila Brown said: "We have had a fantastic turnout."

Merry Christmas

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NEWS

Snappy designs to brighten up charity



Artist Jess Newton from Jess Designs shows off his murals at SNAP adventure playground in Cannock

A CHARITY which runs an adventure playground supporting youngsters with special needs has received an early Christmas present – a mural on the wall.

Jess Newton, aged 42, an artist from Heath Hayes, has painted pictures of the Jungle Book at Snap (Special Needs Adventure Playground) in Pye Green Road, Cannock.

The father-of-three has been drawing and painting since quitting as an art teacher five years ago.

Resurfacing work starts on main road in new year

MAJOR improvement work to resurface two Cannock roads and a busy junction starts in the new year.

Resurfacing of Hednesford Road, Cannock Road and the Central islands junction will begin on Monday January 6. Work to resurface pavements and repair kerbs has already been completed.

To ensure work can be carried out safely and as quickly as possible, some closures will be needed and signed diversions put in place. Closures will take place between 9am and 5pm.

From January 6 until January 24, Hednesford Road will be closed from Old Hednesford Road to Central islands, with work taking place on weekdays only.

Access to the Central islands will be closed from Old Fallow Road, Cemetery Road and Huntington Terrace Road at weekends between 9am and 5pm from January 11 until February 2 so resurfacing can take place.

The final closure will be

on Cannock Road on weekdays only from Central islands to Sankey Road from January 27 to 31. Access to properties and businesses will be maintained throughout the works and some bus routes will be diverted.

Staffordshire County Council's cabinet support member for transport Simon Tagg said: "The resurfacing work in Cannock demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring we have a good quality road network."

Routes

"These are busy roads and a busy junction through a residential area so it is important this work is carried out."

"To ensure the safety of road users and our maintenance team and in order to carry out work as quickly and efficiently as possible we will need to put closures in place."

"We'd ask people to bear with us while the project is carried out, however it will be completed within a month and bring real long-term benefits to the area."

Commissioner's update

POLICE and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis has spoken of the ongoing work to make policing more visible and transparent at a Circle of Residents Association meeting. Mr Ellis was the guest speaker at the Christmas meeting of CORA at Prospect Village Hall in Rawnsley. Updating them on his first 12 months in office, he talked to local people and fielded questions about a range of police and community safety related topics. Speaking afterwards, Mr Ellis said: "The people of Rawnsley gave me a warm welcome. There is a real sense of community spirit here and it was good to debate and answer some great questions."

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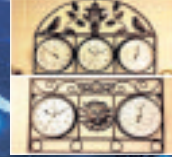
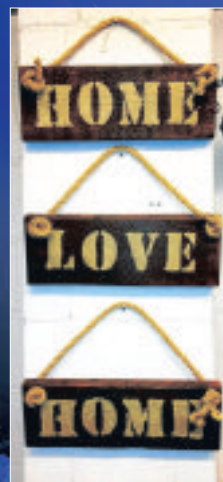
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NEWS

Pub reopens after fire with new look



Manager Jane Evans at the reopened Malt Shovel pub

A PUB that was forced to close for four months after a fire has reopened following a revamp. The Malt Shovel in Chorley has been shut since August when a blaze badly damaged part of the roof.

Manager Jane Evans will be joined by her husband John to the run the pub.

The blaze broke out in a kitchen area at about 5pm on August 7 and soon spread to the roof space of an extension at the rear of the building, where a dog had to be rescued from an accommodation area.

The pub has been restored and fitted with new furniture, lighting and flooring. It has a new menu and a new chef has joined the team. Licensee Chris Coe said she was excited about running her first Punch Taverns pub and unveiling the pub's new look.

She said: "The pub looks fantastic and I can't believe the transformation. The investment will allow us to build upon a successful food and drink offer while bringing the pub back to the community."

As a celebration, the pub will be hosting a party on Burns Night, January 25, with entertainment.

High-speed broadband is now on cards

BUSINESSES in Staffordshire will get help in setting up high-speed broadband after the county council secured £214,000 of funding.

A series of events and training programmes will take place to ensure businesses can take advantage of faster broadband being installed across the county.

Some 472,000 properties are expected to be connected by 2016. The programme will see the laying of more than a million metres of fibre optic cable and more than 500 new broadband street-side cabinets.

by Adam Burling

Increase
The first areas to benefit will be Colton and parts of Rugeley. The council has successfully bid for £214,000 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the project.

Experts will visit businesses to show how they can save money and increase productivity by using fibre broadband services. Project team members will work with businesses until the end of June 2015.

A series of events and training programmes is also being planned. The project is a partnership between Staffordshire County Council,

which has invested nearly £8m, and BT, which has invested £12.47m. Another £7.4m is being put in by the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK).

Installation of fibre cables in Horse Fair, Rugeley, will be incorporated into the county council's £500,000 regeneration project in the area, which is scheduled to be completed in May 2014.

This is in addition to BT's commercial rollout, which will bring faster fibre broadband within reach of more than 360,000 homes and businesses across the county by the end of next spring.

County councillor Mark Winnington, for economy and infrastructure, said: "Our key priority is to bring prosperity and jobs to Staffordshire, and superfast broadband is a part of our strategy on achieving this."

Spitfires in Santa Dash

MEMBERS of a wheelchair basketball club dressed as Father Christmas for a Santa dash around Penkridge. The Stoke Spitfires took part in the annual half-mile village circular organised by the Penkridge & District Round Table. The club formed 10 years ago and is a registered charity. The club plays in Division Three/Division Three Central. It provides the equipment, facilities and training so that disabled people of all ages may participate in the sport of wheelchair basketball and other sports.

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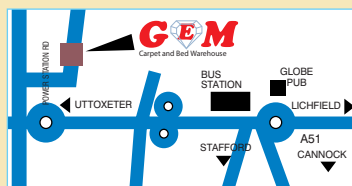


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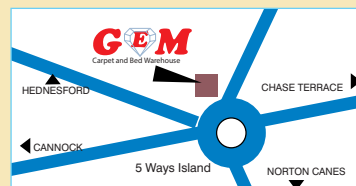


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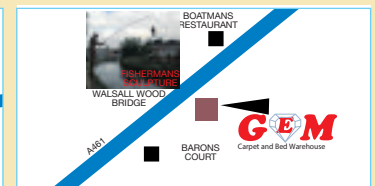


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NEWS

Raffle is just the ticket for charity



Sallie Young, founder of the Rugeley Cats Society, with foster cat Angel which she is now adopting

A GROUP'S fundraising bid will help stray and homeless cats have a happier Christmas... and a brighter New Year.

Members of Rugeley Cats Society have been selling raffle tickets and winners will be drawn on Saturday (December 21) at Morrisons in Rugeley, donor of one of the top prizes – vouchers worth £50. Also up for grabs are Wolves tickets, a car MoT, a £40 No 1 Vets voucher and a host of other goodies.

Proceeds will go to help the many unwanted and stray cats being cared for by society members, paying for food, vet treatment and other desperately-needed necessities.

The society would also welcome donations of cash or cat food to Creature Comforts pet shop in Market Street, Rugeley, and there is a wish list at Amazon where cat goods can be bought. Standing orders or direct debits can be made to the society's account at Barclay's Bank in Rugeley.

Sallie Young launched Rugeley Cats Society in March, after her pet Doris went missing. She has since helped rehome or reunite dozens of cats including Angel, who was a foster cat but will now be staying with Sallie. Anyone that can help is asked to call 07954 429775.

Driver fined for knocking down cyclist

A DRIVER has been ordered to pay more than £800 after reversing his van into a cyclist, fracturing his spine.

Stephen Follows was reversing his Ford Transit when it struck Kevin Smith, throwing him from the bike.

by Craig Hughes

The cyclist, aged 44, spent a week in hospital. He also sustained a chipped pelvis in the accident along Straight Mile, Calf Heath on April 16.

Follows, of Stable Lane, Calf Heath, had denied driving a vehicle in a public place without due care and attention.

Obstruction

But he was found guilty following a trial at Cannock Magistrates Court and was fined £190 with £650 costs and £20 victim surcharge.

The court was told that Follows, aged 31, was reversing off a driveway at around 5pm after visiting his girlfriend. There was a hedge which caused an obstruction but Follows told police he was driving with caution and the cyclist went into the back of his van.

Mike Phillips, prosecuting, said: "He has driven out of the driveway carelessly, he has failed to see Mr Smith."

He said: "I swerved to try and avoid it, it just carried on coming. It threw me off my bike."

Follows told the court he was in the middle of the road and should have been in view of the cyclist. He said Mr Smith must have come between parked vehicles.

"I was reversing off the drive slowly because it is like a race track at that time," he said.

"I had gone out into the middle of the lane. Next thing there is a bang, I have jumped out and asked if he was alright."

Magistrates also put six penalty points on his driving licence.

Christmas tree giveaway

A GARDEN centre is giving away free Christmas trees to community groups. Dobbies, at Gailey, has launched its Great Tree Giveaway as part of its Here We Grow campaign. Community champion Lisa Bird said: "We are giving away free trees to local community groups looking to brighten up any room. Whether you're a school, community organisation, local charity, hospital or care centre, we'd love to hear from you." To put a group forward for consideration, contact Lisa Bird at Dobbies. See www.dobbies.com

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NEWS

Drink drivers named and shamed on Twitter

POLICE have released the names of 20 drink-drivers on social media. Staffordshire Police named and shamed those charged with drink-driving and associated offences since the start of December.

Details were released on Friday, December 13. They were shared across the local Twitter accounts for the policing areas and the Staffordshire Police Facebook page.

The force says it hopes naming and shaming those arrested will prevent others from offending.

Build HS2 phases at same time says report

BOTH phases of HS2 should be built simultaneously, bringing forward the completion date by years, according to a report published by MPs.

The Commons Transport Committee called for both phases of the £50 billion project to be built at the same time as members claimed it was 'essential'.



Chairman Louise Ellman

Chairman continues a tradition

CANNOCK Chase Council's chairman Doris Grice spread some festive cheer when she visited tenants of sheltered housing schemes across the district.

The council chairman makes such visits every year and on Wednesday, December 11, Councillor Grice dropped in on five sheltered housing schemes to spend time with tenants and to wish them a Happy Christmas.

The tenants made an effort to welcome the chairman, getting into the seasonal spirit and started their Christmas activities with drinks and nibbles.

Councillor Grice said: "It has been a pleasure to visit our sheltered housing schemes this Christmas, a council tradition I am keen to continue."

"I have been made very welcome and have enjoyed chatting to the tenants over some Christmas nibbles."

Help to Buy scheme is a benefit to families

MORE than 50 households across Cannock Chase have received support under the Government's Help to Buy equity loans scheme this year.

In the scheme's first six months, 21 new homes were sold, with a further 35 reservations currently being processed.

Under the scheme, the Government lends buyers up to 20 per cent of the cost of a new-build home, leaving them to find a five per cent deposit and the remaining 75 per cent mortgage. The initiative is aimed at first-time buyers and people moving into new-build homes worth up to £600,000.

Aidan Burley MP said: "Here in Cannock Chase the scheme has already supported 56 hard-working families."

The risks of not going ahead with the project 'significantly outweigh the risks of doing so,' added the report. The recommendation to combine construction of both phases means the 330 miles of track could be completed as much as seven years earlier than envisaged.

Current plans would see the London to Birmingham leg completed in 2026 with the second section due to be finished by 2033. The committee said it remained 'convinced' that the project was justified, although the MPs said they would not accept other vital transport projects being sidelined.

Change

In the report, MPs said incoming HS2 Ltd chairman Sir David Higgins should report to ministers by the end of 2014 on whether the two phases could be completed simultaneously.

Louise Ellman, who chairs the committee, said: "We remain confident that construction of a new high-speed line is the only way to deliver the step change in capacity on the West Coast Main Line needed to accommodate long-term demand for both passengers and rail freight."

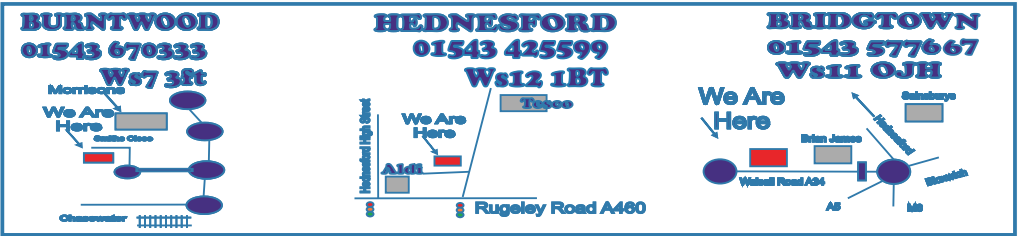
"If we are to spread the benefits from HS2 as widely as possible, it is vital we improve links between the conventional and high-speed networks and bring forward projects to speed up journey times on the conventional network."

Mascot's burial

COLOUR Sergeant Watchman IV, the former official mascot of the Staffordshire Regiment, has been laid to rest. The Staffordshire Bull Terrier died last week aged 15 and was buried outside Burton Town Hall yesterday (Wednesday).

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TRAVEL

No mystery to city's draw

LOOKING to get away this Christmas and new year? It's not too late to book and you'd be sure of a warm welcome at a Travelodge.

The chain has spent £57million on a refurbishment programme at more than 130 hotels. The chain is even celebrating its milestone 15,000th refurbished room.

It is all part of a £223m brand investment with locations including Edinburgh, Southwark and Covent Garden, the latter particularly enticing, as well as Manchester and our own first choice of Liverpool.

It is five years since Liverpool was named the European city of culture but it still has a lot going for it, and as home to the Beatles, needs no further introduction.

Cavern

The Fab Four remain the biggest draw in the city and during our visit we ventured on a Magical Mystery Tour, taking in the childhood homes of John, Paul, George and Ringo, as well as Penny Lane and Strawberry Fields.

There are stops for picture opportunities at the landmark locations, while the tour ends up at the Cavern, the Mathew Street club where the Beatles made their name and where their music lives on.

If you're lucky, you might even get, like we did, the brother of Holly Johnson, of Frankie Goes to Hollywood fame, as tour guide.

But it's not just about the Beatles of course. There is the Museum of Liverpool, Maritime and Slavery Museums, the Tate Gallery, Mersey cruises and the amphibious Yellow Duckmarine to transport visitors around the city sites. Lime Street Station is nearby and shopping is an experience at Liverpool One, and there's a host of eateries.

The hotel itself is the perfect complement with comfortable beds to crash down onto after a busy day of shopping or sightseeing, though parking can be tricky. There are no spaces outside the



The Travelodge at The Strand in Liverpool is ideal for the city centre



Travelodge rooms have undergone a transformation and feature cosy beds

hotel, situated in the heart of the city in The Strand, despite waste land going spare to the side of the building.

Once inside, though, the views from our room were spectacular. Albert Dock is located just opposite and the Liverpool Eye was brightly lit up.

Following a survey carried out by Travelodge, customers requested above all else, a good night's sleep, so particular attention has been paid to

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Normal Collection Day...

Mon 23rd Dec

Tues 24th Dec (Christmas Eve)

Weds 25th Dec (Christmas Day)

Thurs 26th Dec (Boxing Day)

Fri 27th Dec

Will be collected on...

Sat 21st Dec

Mon 23rd Dec

Tues 24th Dec (Christmas Eve)

Fri 27th Dec

Sat 28th Dec

Normal Collection Day...

Mon 30th Dec

Tues 31st Dec (New Years Eve)

Weds 1st Jan 2014 (New Years Day)

Thurs 2nd Jan 2014

Fri 3rd Jan 2014

Will be collected on...

Mon 30th Dec

Tues 31st Dec (New Years Eve)

Thurs 2nd Jan 2014

Fri 3rd Jan 2014

Sat 4th Jan 2014

Normal collections will recommence on
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NEWS

Christmas delivery for elderly residents



Father and Mother Christmas, aka Val and John Rivers, visit Lakeview Care Home, in Great Wyrley

RUDOLPH and his team got a day off – so Father and Mother Christmas could rev up on mobility scooters to make a special delivery in Great Wyrley.

The couple toured the Windermere Unit at Lakeview Care Home in Stafford Road on their scooters. They delivered gifts to the 11 residents in the unit and visited older people from the home's four other units.

Mother Christmas – alias Val Rivers, from Fallings Park, Wolverhampton – said: "I have my own scooter because I have arthritis and we borrowed another one for my husband, John, who is Father Christmas, to visit the home."

"We used to be semi-professional entertainers. We still go to Lakeview Care Home to entertain."

Chris Carr, activities co-ordinator for the Windermere Unit at Lakeview, which is owned by Alpha Care Homes, said: "Everyone had a great day. It was fantastic fun for our residents to be visited by Father and Mother Christmas."

Labour angry over 'smooth roads' claim

A LEADING councillor has described Staffordshire's roads as 'so smooth you can play pool on them'.

Deputy county council leader Ian Parry boasted at a full council meeting that Tory investment had reversed years of Labour failure.

When opposition councillors quizzed bosses over spending on the county's highways, Tory Councillor Parry said in the last four years the authority had to 'clear up the mess' left by the previous Labour administration.

Incensed

He said: "Staffordshire's roads are so smooth you can kneel down and kiss the tarmac and say 'thank you Tories' for clearing up our mess'. They are so smooth you can play pool on them."

Labour councillors were incensed by the comment. Stafford Central councillor Maureen Compton said the state of Queensway in Stafford was 'awful'. She said: "I'm told it needs about £600,000 worth of work so hopefully you can find the money for that."

Councillor Mark Winnington, cabinet member for economy and infrastructure, said the council had spent £160 million on the high-

by Rob Gollidge

ways. He said: "When the opposition was in power the roads were in an horrendous state."

"We spent £160m to get the roads in a state where we can cut the funding down because we have got them in a better state."

He told the council that a new audit he commissioned had shown the roads were 10 per cent better under the Tories than Labour. But he added: "We will fill the potholes but we won't always get billiard table roads because of the British weather."

Council leader Philip Atkins said investment in the roads had created economic growth. It comes after the council unveiled a crackdown on roadworks to stop drivers getting caught up in hours of delays on major routes.

Firms will be required to apply for a permit for works, which county council bosses say could save millions.

Get toned up at centre

A TONING room is available to use throughout the week at Penkridge Leisure Centre. It is open at the Cannock Road centre from 8.30am until 9pm Monday to Friday, from 9am to 2pm on Saturdays and from 9am to 6pm on Sundays. New members must take an induction. Call 01785 714152 for more information or to make an appointment.

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Edmund Howdle

NEWS

Ceremony celebrates cadets' achievements



Matthew Ellis and Sue Arnold present Kerry Wright, right, with a patron certificate as cadets look on

THE first batch of Staffordshire's Young Police Cadets from the Cannock Unit have celebrated their achievements in an awards evening.

All 21 Cannock cadets were presented with certificates of achievement on Monday, December 9 at a ceremony at Cannock Community fire station in Hedgesford Road.

Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis joined Assistant Chief Constable Julian Blazeby and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Arnold to present cer-

tificates to the 14-to-17-year-olds. Cadets work towards Duke of Edinburgh bronze, silver and gold awards having a go at hiking, climbing and orienteering.

Police officers who volunteer to help run the Stafford unit were also recognised and presented with certificates by Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Arnold.

Kerry Wright, from the Cannock Chase District Council Partnership team, was presented with a certificate of thanks for becoming a Gold Patron of the Cadet scheme.

Theft gang member jailed

A CRIMINAL gang stole 10 cars worth £20,000 across the Midlands in a seven-week spree, a court heard.

Father-of-three Joseph Holmes, of Sileup Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, was jailed for 16 months for his part in the thefts. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to rob, to settle a drug debt.

Wolverhampton crown court heard Holmes, a 31-year-old with no previous convictions, was 'pressurised' into helping to steal 4x4s, people carriers and vans between September and

October 2012. The total value of the vehicles taken was around £20,000.

Mr Mark Philips, prosecuting, said victims were left stranded and unable to go out to work as many of the vehicles taken contained tools.

Driveway

The spree started on September 9 when a van was taken from Station Road in Great Wyrley. A Toyota people carrier was taken from a driveway in Bentley, Walsall, while a vehicle was also taken outside Hawthorne Primary School, Kingstanding and 4x4 contain-

ing £1,500 worth of tools was taken from Cedar Avenue in Brownhills.

A people carrier was taken from Bescot Road, Pleck and there were thefts in Cheslyn Hay, Great Barr and Essington.

Mr Philips said Holmes was picked up by police after his own vehicle was traced through the automatic number plate recognition system. He is the only member of the gang that has so far been traced.

Mr Austen Bannister, defending, said: "He was pressurised into carrying out these thefts."

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FOCUS ON HEDNESFORD**Cindy reveals delight as
Christmas tale published**

A HEDNESFORD author says she is delighted that her third book has been published.

Cindy Faulkner wrote and illustrated Shaun and the Christmas Elf following the success of her Halloween storybook last year.

She said: "I am delighted to have Shaun and the Christmas Elf published. The book is all about Shaun and his Christmas adventure."

"I absolutely love writing and drawing and I decided to do this book following on from the Hednesford Park Spooky Halloween story I wrote."

Series

"I wrote that one with the help of children from West Hill School but this one I have done on my own."

"I decided this one would be a Christmas story and I hope that I will be able to turn it into a series of books featuring Shaun in the future."

Mrs Faulkner will be signing copies of her book at The Delicious Cafe in Market Street from 3.30pm tomorrow (Friday).

She will be reading extracts from the book at The Lightworks between 1pm and 3pm on Saturday. The book will be available to buy from Amazon and Hednesford traders.



Hednesford writer Cindy Faulkner with her three published books

**Carols follows festive
fair at Salvation Army**

THE Hednesford branch of the Salvation Army will host its annual Christmas carol service at the weekend.

People can join in the festivities at the Army's base in Anglesey Street on Sunday (December 22) at 6pm.

There will also be a fair at the base from 10am to 1pm on Saturday with cards, toys, books and cakes on sale as well as a grotto with proceeds to the branch.

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New York gallery snaps up painting for £3,814



AN INDIAN Mughal painting was sold to a prominent New York art gallery for more than £3,000.

It was one of the highlights of a successful December Fine Art sale at Cuttlestones in Penkridge.

Dating from the first half of the 18th century and depicting two aristocratic ladies seated facing one another on a riverbank, the stunning piece, lot 567, was snapped up for £3,814 over the internet and has already embarked on its transatlantic journey.

Meanwhile, an item with origins

somewhat closer to home also proved a star performer. Lot 421, a Woods type pottery Toby Jug depicting a seated figure wearing a black tricorn hat, holding a pitcher and drinking ale, shattered its estimate of £200 to £400 when it sold for £2,145.

Mahogany

Silver also proved especially strong, with an extensive collection of modern pieces split into 72 lots selling for more than £8,500.

In the furniture section lot 667, an early 20th century mahogany wind out dining table with four leaves, and fea-

turing four large cabriole supports with carved detail, achieved £1,430 while an unusual 19th century rosewood writing companion, lot 573, with inlaid brass stag detail fetched £1,072.

In the fine wines & spirits section, a vintage bottle of 96 per cent Green Chartreuse from the maker L. Garnier, presented in a bottle embossed 'Gde CHARTREUSE' and with both label and seal in exceptional condition, sold for £190.

Cuttlestones MD Ben Gamble said: "Success across the categories is becoming something of a theme in recent fine art sales, and December was

no exception. We're seeing more and more international sales via the internet and telephone bidding, and it was great to see such a fine painting sell to a prominent gallery in New York.

"The surprise of the sale was undoubtedly the Toby jug - they really are the 'marmite' of the antiques world - you either love them or hate them, but the collectors were really out en-force after this specimen."

Cuttlestones is now taking consignments for its first Fine Art auction of 2014, to take place in March. To arrange a valuation call 01785 714905 or visit www.cuttlestones.co.uk



The surprise Toby Jug lot

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On the 10th August 2011, Munchies opened its doors in the newly refurbished premises previously known as The Ruby Restaurant creating a bright, warm and welcoming atmosphere for meeting up with old friends for coffee or sitting and enjoying a cooked breakfast or fulfilling lunch. It is the intention of the owners to create a cafe providing good quality locally sourced products at affordable prices where customer satisfaction is high on the list of priorities.

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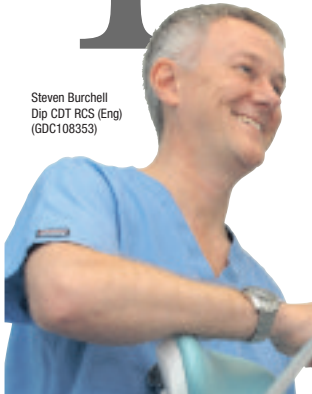


Infectious laughter, happy moments and enjoying 'me' time – meet denture implant couple John and Gillian.

Love is sharing smiles,
a second chance of
romance and two . . .

Transformations

Steven Burchell
Dip CDT RCS (Eng)
(GDC108353)



LOVE is a second chance of romance, embracing life and sharing smiles – lots of them. For retired couple Gillian and John, sharing time together, enjoying holidays, meals out and trips to the theatre, life has opened an unexpected new chapter of happiness after they both lost their partners.

Their laughter is infectious and their zest for life inspirational. The widow and widower, both young 70-somethings, met at a mutual friend's golden wedding party and the rest, as they say, is history. But John didn't only discover a new soul mate, he also found a new patient for dentist Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS (Eng).

Principal of the Denture Clinic in North Street, Dudley, Steven says: "They're such refreshing company and I am thrilled they are so happy together."

"But I'm also pleased we were able to resolve a long-standing lower denture

problem for Gillian as well as create a lovely warm smile for her that suits her personality."

John recalls he was first to attend the Denture Clinic after spending nearly four years "perusing stories in the papers" about Steven's work.

Like many denture wearers he had encountered stabilisation problems with his lower denture as gums receded with the normal ageing process. "I knew I had to get something done because when I was driving my lower teeth could dance up and down," says John.

Crunchy salads

Steven referred him to dental implantologist Jon Pugh BDS MSc, with whom the dentist has long-standing professional relationship.

"I decided to go for an implant-retained over-denture which clips on to two fixings. I would never let anything stop me from enjoying a meal out before I had the implants, but things are great now. I can have steak, eat crunchy salads and feel

free to have anything off the menu," he says.

Gillian had endured a similar stabilisation problem for two years and was persuaded by John to see Steven because her dentures "were always loose."

Again an implant-retained over-denture was prescribed and Mr Pugh also rebuilt Gillian's upper front teeth with crowns. The results are obvious: Natural looking, functional teeth and an engaging smile.

"Previous dental treatment could never resolve my problems. If I ate out I'd have to order soft options," but I put up with it," says Gillian.

"We laugh a lot, smile a lot and enjoy life. This is my 'me' time," she adds.

And what of their experience at the Denture Clinic? "Steven is like family to us," says John.

Steven added: "By using implant retained over-dentures we can guarantee to resolve stability issues. We prescribe and produce our dentures on the premises and it means I can be fastidious about quality."

Options

Traditional

THE Denture Clinic is renowned for its natural look. Denturist Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS (Eng), says: "Quality, traditional dentures can be hugely effective."

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CHRISTMAS TV

Matt Smith's last stand as the Doctor

Downton Christmas special

Danny Dyer joins EastEnders

Merry Christmas

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Christmas Eve

BBC 1



Edward is forced to make a confession in Holby City, 8.00pm

6.00 Breakfast 9.00 The Gruffalo (R) **9.30 A CBeebies Christmas Carol** Adaptation of the Charles Dickens novel. **10.10 Sarah & Duck: Christmas Special 10.20 FILM: The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause** (2006) Christmas fantasy comedy sequel, starring Tim Allen. **11.45 Only Fools and Horses** Part two of two. The Trotters arrive in America. (R) **1.10 BBC News 1.20 Regional News; Weather. 1.30 FILM: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** (2005) Four children discover a secret entrance to a mystical land that an evil witch has cursed with perpetual winter. Fantasy adventure, starring Tilda Swinton and Georgie Henley. **1.45**

BBC 2



Jo Brand Phill Jupitus and Brendan O'Carroll feature in QI XL, 9.00pm

6.00 This Is BBC 2 6.50 Natural World: Animal House (R) **7.50 FILM: Herbie Rides Again** (1974) Disney comedy sequel, starring Helen Hayes. **9.15 Westminster Abbey** The choir prepares to sing at a papal Mass in St Peter's Basilica, Rome. (R) **10.15 FILM: An American in Paris** (1951) Romantic musical, starring Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron. **11.45 12.05 FILM: Splash!** (1984) Romantic fantasy comedy, with Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah. **1.50 FILM: Guys and Dolls** (1955) A gambler tries to win the heart of a Salvation Army member, while his friend searches for somewhere to hold an illegal dice game. Musical, with Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando. **1.55**

ITV



Priya tells David to call off the wedding in Emmerdale, 7.00pm

6.00 Daybreak 8.30 Lorraine 9.25 FILM: The Christmas Takeover (1998) A cold-hearted tycoon goes to the North Pole to drive Santa out of business, only to have a crisis of conscience. Comedy drama, starring Harry Hamlin and William Hootkins. **11.30 Catchphrase** Revival of the game show, hosted by Stephen Mulhern. (R) **12.15 ITV News and Weather 12.30 Let's Do Christmas** with Gino & Mel With singer Billy Ocean. Last in the series. **1.30 Steppin' Out** with Katherine Jenkins A cabaret show with the classical singer and celebrity guests. (R) **2.45 Gary Barlow: Journey to Afghanistan** The X Factor judge performs a concert for British troops at Camp Bastion. (R)

CH4



Chris O'Dowd, The IT Crowd Special: The Internet Is Coming, 9.00pm

6.20 Wilde Stories Animated version of The Selfish Giant. (R) **6.50 Wilde Stories** (R) **7.15 The Bear** Animation based on the Raymond Briggs tale. (R) **7.45 FILM: The Nativity Story** (2006) Biblical drama, starring Keisha Castle-Hughes. **9.45 The Big Bang Theory** Army and Penny use Bernadette to spy on Leonard and Priya. (R) **10.15 The Big Bang Theory** (R) **10.40 The Simpsons** The family spends Christmas on a ranch. (R) **11.10 The Simpsons** (R) **11.40 The Simpsons** (R) **12.10 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas** Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition. **1.10 FILM: It's a Wonderful Life** (1946) Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart. (b/w) **1.45**

CH5



Ashley Maddocks, Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas, 8.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Chinese Food in Minutes Animated cooking. (R) **10.05 The Dog Rescuers** A Grimsby inspector finds two puppies locked in a dirty bathroom. (R) **10.40 World's Strongest Man 2013: Qualifiers** James Richardson presents action from the Giants Live Series event in Norway, which was the fourth qualifier for the World's Strongest Man heats. (R) **11.40 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Cracker** The truckers deliver a consignment of reindeer for a Christmas parade. (R) **12.40 FILM: Clash of the Titans** (1981) A hero of ancient Greece journeys into the underworld to save a princess from being sacrificed to a sea monster. Mythical adventure, starring Harry Hamlin and Laurence Olivier. **1.45**

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.40 Toy Story 2 (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks. **4.15**

5.10 Shrek the Halls Festive animated short, starring the lovable ogre. (R)

5.35 BBC News 5.50 Midlands Today; Weather.

5.55 Finding Nemo (2003) Animated adventure, with the voices of Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres. **6.15**

7.30 EastEnders A defiant David resists Janine's plea to drop his blackmail plan, and Joey is optimistic as Alice's hearing arrives. Alfie and Kat bid an emotional farewell to the Queen Vic. **8.00**

Holby City Edward is forced to make a confession about Mary-Claire, Zosia is determined not to let her father back into her life, and Mo tries to pluck up the courage to ask Mr Thompson out. **9.00**

Last Tango in Halifax Gillian worries about the fallout from her confession and Kate is rushed to hospital. Caroline's emotions are in turmoil as Celia and Alan's wedding day dawns. Last in the series. **10.00**

Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee invites Lucy and her parents to join him and Daisy to spend Christmas in a cosy old country house that used to belong to his aunt – but they soon sense a spooky presence. **10.45**

Unnumbered Christmas special from 2012. The Brockmans throw a party, but Karen is too busy chatting online, Jake has fallen in with a bad crowd and the less said about the guests the better. (R) National Lottery Update **11.30 BBC News; Weather.**

11.45 Westminster Abbey: The First Eucharist of Christmas Live service from Westminster Abbey in London, led by the Very Rev John Hall. Carols include: 'O Come, All Ye Faithful, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing and O Little Town of Bethlehem. **1.05**

FILM: Protocol (1984) Comedy, with Goldie Hawn and Chris Sarandon. **1.45** **Weatherview 2.40 BBC News**

4.15 Fantasia (1940) Premiere. Animated anthology, set to famous pieces of classical music. **4.45**

6.15 Carols from King's Music and readings from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, including the carols Once in Royal David's City, O Little Town of Bethlehem and God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen. **7.30**

The Perfect Morecambe & Wise Christmas Special A selection of classic clips from the duo's festive BBC specials, including Angela Rippon coming out from behind the news desk and Andre Previn being shown how to play Grieg. **8.00**

Victoria Wood's Midlife Christmas A festive special from 2009 that attempts to cram a night's Christmas viewing into an hour. Highlights include the Midlife Olympics 2009, popular costume drama Lark Pies to Cranchesterford and the adventures of soap star Bo Beaumont. (R) **9.00**

QI XL Stephen Fry hosts a festive edition of the comedy quiz, with Jo Brand, Phill Jupitus, Brendan O'Carroll and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of Kris Kringle. **9.45**

Mel Smith: I've Sort of Done Things A celebration of the life and career of the actor, writer and director, who died in July at the age of 60. With contributions by Griff Rhys Jones, John Lloyd and Richard Curtis. **10.45**

Comedy Connections The story of how Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones collaborated to create one of the most successful and influential partnerships in comedy history. (R) **11.25**

The Awakening (2011) An investigator of supernatural hoaxes has her sceptical beliefs challenged when she is summoned to a haunting at a boarding school. Horror, starring Rebecca Hall and Dominic West. **1.05**

FILM: The Spiral Staircase (1945) Period thriller, starring Dorothy McGuire. (b/w) **1.45** **This Is BBC 2**

3.45 Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me Drama, starring Laurence Fox and Sarah Smart. (R)

5.15 The Nation's Favourite Christmas Song A countdown of the top 20 festive tunes. (R)

6.45 ITV News and Weather 7.00 Emmerdale An emotional Priya tells David she wants him to call off the wedding and be a proper family with her and the baby. Megan packs her bags to leave after Declan lashes out again. **7.30**

You've Been Framed! At Christmas Harry Hill narrates a festive and comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a kid wrestling a Christmas tree and the world's most terrifying present. **8.00**

Midsomer Murders New series. Return of the long-running detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon. It's a time of joy and happiness in Midsomer for once – Christmas is coming, and DCI Barnaby and his wife Sarah (Fiona Dolman) are soon to become parents. But the festive mood changes when a man is stabbed to death with an antique sword during a ghost-hunting party at a spooky manor house in Morton Shallows. Is blacksmith's daughter Rose Wilton seeking revenge from beyond the grave, or will Barnaby and new sidekick DS Charlie Nelson (Gwilym Lee) find a more earthy motive behind the murder? **10.00**

ITV News at Ten and Weather

10.15 Christmas Carols on ITV Aled Jones presents an evening of festive performances from St Michael the Archangel Church in the village of Kirby Malham, North Yorkshire. **11.15**

Couples Retreat (2009) Four couples sign up for relationship therapy on a tropical island, but the treatment only serves to drive them apart. Comedy, starring Vince Vaughn, Malin Akerman and Jon Favreau. **1.15**

The Jeremy Kyle Show USA **2.00** **ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show** (R)

3.50 The Grinch (2000) Fantasy comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **4.15**

6.00 The Simpsons Featuring a parody of Michael Bay's Transformers. (R)

6.25 Hollyoaks Grace urges Trevor to push ahead with his malicious plans for Mercedes. **6.55**

Channel 4 News 7.00 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it. **7.05**

Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas Festive spin-off of the animated films. Sid the sloth tries to redeem himself after accidentally ruining one of Manny the mammoth's Christmas traditions. (R) **7.30**

The Snowman and the Snowdog Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman, in which a boy's snowman and snowdog magically come to life and take him on an adventure to the North Pole. (R) **8.05**

Big Fat Gypsy Weddings: Carols and Caravans Following the Christmas celebrations of the travelling community, including an escape to the sun in Tenerife, a festive 18th birthday party and a spectacular winter wedding. (R) **9.00**

The IT Crowd Special: The Internet Is Coming Roy and Jen's reputations are put at risk in the final episode when an incident involving split coffee and a homeless person ends up on the internet. Comedy, starring Chris O'Dowd. Part of The IT Crowd Night. (R) **10.00**

The IT Crowd Manual Behind the scenes of the comedy. **11.05**

The IT Crowd: The Fans' Favourite Episode A people's choice episode. (R) **11.35**

The IT Crowd: The Writer's Favourite Episode Graham Linehan's favourite chapter for the gang. (R) **12.10**

The Inbetweeners (R) **12.40 The Inbetweeners** (R) **1.10 The Inbetweeners** (R) **1.35 The Inbetweeners** (R) **2.05 FILM: Idiocracy** (2006) **2.45** **Suburgatory** **4.30 Suburgatory** **4.50 Suburgatory** **5.15 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun** (R)

3.00 Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (1988) Comedy, starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin. **4.15**

5.10 Scrooge A Christmas Carol (1951) A hard-hearted skintiff is taught the error of his ways by a succession of spectral visitors. Adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, with Alastair Sim and Mervyn Johns. **6.00**

Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas A compilation of the most memorable festive moments from the series following the haulage company, featuring workers battling the elements, the traffic and the Christmas rush. 5 News Update **8.00**

The Muppets and Lady Gaga at Christmas The pop superstar joins forces with the furry gang of puppets for an entertainment extravaganza, performing seasonal favourites and her own hits. She sings duets with Kermit the Frog, musician Elton John, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt and drag artist RuPaul, while Forgetting Sarah Marshall star Kristen Bell appears in a sketch alongside the Muppets and Lady Gaga. (R) 5 News at 9 **9.10**

Greatest Ever Christmas Movies Countdown of the best festive films, from White Christmas and It's a Wonderful Life to Bad Santa and Elf. Gremlins star Zach Galligan and Miracle on 34th Street's Mara Wilson talk about their experiences making their movies, while Aled Jones reveals that he hadn't even seen classic animation The Snowman until 10 years ago – despite having a hit in 1985 with a version of its famous song Walking in the Air. Featuring contributions by Ollie Locke, Stacey Solomon, Joe Swash and Eamonn Holmes. **12.05**

Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights (R) **1.05 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights** **3.55 House Doctor** (R) **4.20 House Doctor** (R) **4.45 Great Artists** (R) **5.10 Nick's Quest** (R) **5.35 Wildlife SOS** (R)

Christmas Day

BBC 1



Michael McIntyre's Showtime, from the O2 in London, 10.05pm

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. 9.00 **The Gruffalo's Child** Animated sequel, with the voice of Robbie Coltrane. (R) 9.25 **The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper** (R) 9.40 **Old Jack's Boat: The Christmas Quest** Jack's search for three Christmas gifts. 10.00 **Christmas Day: Live from Westminster Abbey** Traditional morning service. 11.00 **FILM: Chicken Run** (2000) Animated comedy, with the voices of Mel Gibson and Julia Sawalha. ★★ 12.20 **BBC News: Weather**. 12.30 **FILM: The Princess and the Frog** (2009) Disney animated musical fantasy, with the voice of Anika Noni Rose. ★★ 2.00 **Top of the Pops Christmas** The year's most successful chart acts.

BBC 2



Actor Mark Gatiss presents MR James: Ghost Writer, 10.05pm

6.00 **This Is BBC 2** 6.20 **Natural World: The Real Jungle Book** Bear India's sloth bear, the inspiration for The Jungle Book's Baloo. (R) 7.20 **FILM: Herbie Goes Bananas** (1980) Disney adventure, starring Cloris Leachman. ★★ 8.50 **FILM: The Red Shoes** (1948) Oscar-winning drama, with Moira Shearer. ★★ 11.00 **Carols from King's** Music and readings from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. (R) 12.15 **Music of the Monarchy** with David Starkey A selection of full-length royal classics. 1.20 **Swingin' Christmas** Festive music by the John Wilson Orchestra. (R) 2.45 **The Perfect Morescambe & Wise Christmas Special** A selection of classic clips from the duo's festive BBC specials. (R)

ITV



Nick flies into a rage and slaps Leanne in Coronation Street, 7.30pm

6.00 **CITV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou**. (R) 6.10 **Dino Dan** (R) 6.25 **Dino Dan** (R) 6.40 **Sooty** (R) 6.50 **Bookaboo** (R) 7.05 **Horrid Henry**. (R) 7.20 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 7.40 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 7.55 **Bottom Knockers** 8.10 **Bottom Knockers** 8.25 **Dinner Date** (R) 9.25 **FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie** (1985) Family fantasy adventure, starring Dudley Moore. ★★ 11.25 **The Chase: Celebrity Special** (R) 12.30 **The Big Christmas Reunion** (R) 1.30 **You've Been Framed!** At Christmas (R) 2.00 **River Deep Mountain High: James Nesbitt in New Zealand** James Nesbitt travels from the tip of the North Island down to the South.

CH4



David Dickinson, Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special, 9.30pm

6.10 **Ivor the Invisible** (R) 6.35 **Prep & Landing** (R) 7.00 **Famous Fred** (R) 7.25 **Little Wolf's Book of Badness** (R) 7.55 **Olive, the Other Reindeer** (R) 8.50 **FILM: James and the Giant Peach** (1996) ★★ 10.25 **FILM: Horton Hears a Who!** (2008) ★★ 12.05 **The Big Bang Theory** Bernadette receives her PhD. (R) 12.35 **The Big Bang Theory** Sheldon re-evaluates the time he spends with Amy. 1.05 **The Simpsons** Homer plays Santa. (R) 1.40 **The Snowman** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 2.10 **The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R) 2.45 **The Simpsons** Bart destroys the family's Christmas presents. (R)

CH5



Noddy Holder narrates Britain's Greatest Christmas Lights, 7.30pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 8.05 **FILM: Scrooge** (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. ★★ 10.15 **FILM: Gone with the Wind** (1939) A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roguish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. ★★ 2.35 **FILM: Casablanca** (1942) The owner of a Moroccan nightclub is reunited with an old flame who needs his help to escape the country. Romantic drama, starring Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman and Claude Rains. (b/w) ★★

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.00 **The Queen**
3.10 **BBC News: Weather**
3.20 **Toy Story 3** (2010) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. ★★
5.00 **Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special** Six Strictly newcomers compete.
6.15 **Call the Midwife: Christmas Special** Preparations for Shalagh's wedding are rudely interrupted by the discovery of an unexploded bomb, forcing the residents to pull together as they are evacuated to safety.
7.30 **Doctor Who** Matt Smith makes his final appearance as the Doctor, who joins some of the universe's deadliest alien species drawn to a mysterious message emanating from a backwater planet.
8.30 **EastEnders** Bianca is put out when Nikki arrives at her house on Christmas Day, while David and Carol get closer – but Janine looks set to ruin things.
9.30 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** The first of two festive editions. Mrs Brown tries to find out what her grandson wants for Christmas and loses her temper at the family games night when no one plays by her rules.
10.05 **Michael McIntyre's Showtime** Stand-up comedy performed at the O2 in London during his 10-night run in 2012, featuring stories about a horrific trip to the dentist and watching his wife get undressed.
11.05 **BBC News: Weather**
11.20 **On Christmas Night** Actor Patrice Naiambana reads from the Gospel of St Matthew, followed by the Sussex Carol performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.
11.25 **The Vicar of Dibley** The villagers celebrate Christmas, and vicar Geraldine learns there is a heavy price to be paid for festive kindness when she agrees to attend three slap-up lunches. (R) National Lottery Update
12.10 **Would I Lie to You? At Christmas** (R) 12.40 **FILM: Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy** (2004) ★★ 2.15 **Weatherview** 2.20 **BBC News**

3.15 **Doctor Who at the Proms** Highlights of the 2013 concert featuring music from the sci-fi series. (R)
4.30 **An Adventure in Space and Time** Drama about the creation of Doctor Who, starring David Bradley. (R)
6.00 **Sign Zone: The Queen** Her Majesty's annual address to the nation and the Commonwealth. (R)
6.10 **Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty** A performance of Tchaikovsky's ballet by the New Adventures dance company, reimagined by Matthew Bourne as a supernatural love story featuring vampires, fairies and gothic opulence.
7.40 **Christmas Night with the Two Ronnies** The comedy duo perform songs and sketches in a Christmas special from 1987, featuring a guest appearance by Charlton Heston and music by Elton John. (R)
8.30 **Morescambe & Wise: Leading Ladies** Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's shows featuring appearances by female stars of stage and screen.
9.30 **The Tractate Middoth** Terrifying spirits are summoned to a library after two men search for an obscure Hebrew text. Mark Gatiss's adaptation of MR James's tale, starring Sacha Dhawan and John Castle.
10.05 **MR James: Ghost Writer** Actor and writer Mark Gatiss examines the life and career of author MR James, attempting to uncover the inspirations behind his stories of the supernatural.
11.05 **QI XL** Stephen Fry presents a festive special from 2010, as Daniel Radcliffe, Graham Norton, Lee Mack and regular Alan Davies answer questions on the theme of hocus pocus. (R)
11.50 **Hebburn Sarah** flies in to Hebburn for Christmas from Switzerland with Jack, and her parents and miserable grandmother head up north too. Last in the series. (R)
12.20 **FILM: Dead Poets Society** (1989) ★★ 2.25 **This Is BBC 2**

3.00 **The Queen Her Majesty's annual address.**
3.10 **ITV News and Weather**
3.20 **Tangled** (2010) Disney animated comedy, with the voice of Mandy Moore. ★★
5.15 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas** The comedian helps out at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home over the festive period.
6.15 **Emmerdale** Hour-long episode. Alicia and David's wedding day arrives and everything seems to be going wrong, while Charity catches a drunken Declan pouring petrol around his house.
7.15 **ITV News and Weather**
7.30 **Coronation Street** Hour-long episode. Nick flies into a rage and slaps Leanne, Roy's hopes for a quiet Christmas with Hayley are dashed, and Carla makes Peter an equal partner in Underworld.
8.30 **Downton Abbey** It's summer and as part of Rose's debutante 'coming out' she is to be presented at Buckingham Palace. The family is in London, preparing Grantham House for the busy social programme, and Martha Levinson, not one to miss such a grand occasion, arrives from New York with Cora's recently disgraced brother Harold (Sideways star Paul Giamatti). Both outspoken and larger than life, they make quite an impression on certain members of high society. Meanwhile, when the Crawleys are implicated in a scandal that threatens to engulf the monarchy, Robert goes to great lengths to protect the royal family – and his own. Last in the series.
10.30 **ITV News and Weather**
10.45 **Love Actually** (2003) Interlinked tales of several people in search of love. Richard Curtis's romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Martine McCutcheon, Emma Thompson, Colin Firth, Bill Nighy and Liam Neeson. ★★
1.10 **Christmas Carols on ITV** (R) 2.10 **FILM: Closing the Ring** (2007) Drama, starring Shirley MaLaine. ★★ 4.05 **ITV Nightscreen**

4.15 **Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas** Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.
4.15 **The Alternative Christmas Message** Another famous face delivers an alternative to the Queen's speech.
4.20 **Channel 4 News**
4.30 **4thought.tv** How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.
4.35 **The Muppet Christmas Carol** (1992) Puppet comedy, starring Michael Caine. ★★
6.15 **Home Alone 2: Lost in New York** (1992) A boy ends up stranded in the Big Apple – where he bumps into two familiar burglars with an axe to grind. Comedy sequel, starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern. ★★
8.30 **Bear's Wild Weekend with Stephen Fry** Bear Grylls takes the QI host on an expedition to the Italian Dolomites, setting him a series of challenges, from travelling on the skids of a helicopter to descending a waterfall.
9.30 **Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special** The comedian hosts a show filled with festive fun and frolics, joined by Russell Brand, Davina McCall and David Dickinson. Little Mix perform their new single. Last in the series.
10.35 **Man Down Christmas Special** Scrooge 3000 – a festive school play set in space – and a terrifying yuletide tradition are just two of the Christmas challenges that risk reducing Dan's life to a crumbling mess.
11.05 **Father Ted Christmas Special** Fathers Ted and Dougal endure their worst Christmas ever when they get lost in a lingerie department, leaving them in a highly embarrassing predicament. Festive edition from 1996. (R)
12.15 **Father Ted** (R) 12.50 **Father Ted** (R) 1.20 **Father Ted** (R) 1.45 **Father Ted** (R) 2.15 **Father Ted** (R) 2.40 **Father Ted** (R) 3.05 **FILM: A Matter of Life and Death** (1946) ★★ 4.50 90210 5.30 **Suburgatory** 5.55 **Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice** (R)

4.40 **Greatest Ever Christmas Movies** Countdown of the best festive films, from It's a Wonderful Life to Bad Santa. Featuring contributions by Gremkins star Zach Galligan and Miracle on 34th Street's Mara Wilson. (R)
7.30 **Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights** Former Slade frontman Noddy Holder narrates a documentary following four households as they turn their homes into electric winter wonderlands with extensive displays of festive illuminations. For these Christmas obsessives, who include Dave and Carol Edwards, putting up the lights involves a head for heights, DIY wiring skills and an unshakable resolve, with some inspired by the bling of Blackpool while others aim for the ambitious scale of a West End show. (R)
8.30 **Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas** A compilation of the most memorable festive moments from the series following the day-to-day work of the haulage company that has road, rail and air divisions. The programme features 12 of the best tales of the firm's employees as they battle the elements, the traffic and the crazy Christmas rush to make sure their deliveries are on time. (R)
9.30 **Michael Jackson's This Is It** (2009) Premiere. Documentary following the singer rehearsing for his planned 50 shows at London's O2, before his death in June 2009. Featuring interviews with Jackson and performances of classic hits including Billy Jean and Wanna Be Startin' Something. ★★
11.40 **Greatest Christmas TV Moments** Countdown of 50 festive TV highlights, featuring Gavin & Stacey, Morescambe & Wise, Only Fools and Horses, Wallace and Gromit, Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and The Royle Family. (R)
2.35 **SuperCasino** 3.55 **House Doctor** (R) 4.20 **House Doctor** (R) 4.45 **Great Artists** (R) 5.10 **Nick's Quest** (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** (R)

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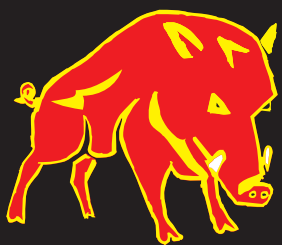
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Boxing Day

BBC 1



Landlord Mick makes his presence felt in EastEnders, 7.15pm

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. 9.00 Room on the Broom (R) 9.25 Mouse and Mole at Christmas Time Snowmole takes Mouse to a land where all of his wishes come true. 9.55 FILM: 101 Dalmatians (1996) Disney comedy adventure remake, starring Glenn Close. *** 11.30 FILM: Flushed Away (2006) Animated adventure, featuring the voice of Hugh Jackman. *** 12.50 BBC News 1.05 FILM: Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005) Oscar-winning animated adventure, with the voice of Peter Sallis. *** 2.25 FILM: Alice in Wonderland (2010) Fantasy adventure, starring Mia Wasikowska. ***

BBC 2



Ben Fogle, Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert on at 9.15pm

6.00 This Is BBC 2 Preview of upcoming programmes. 6.05 Natural World The devastating power of the African driver ant. (R) 6.50 FILM: Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo (1977) Disney comedy adventure sequel, starring Dean Jones. *** 8.35 Westminster Abbey The new intake of pupils talk about their lives at the choir school. Last in the series. (R) 9.35 Earthflight Bird's-eye view of the natural world. (R) 10.35 Pride & Prejudice: Having a Ball A team of experts recreates a Regency ball. (R) 12.05 FILM: Emma (1996) Jane Austen drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Ewan McGregor. *** 2.00 Operation Snow Tiger Part one of two. Scientists studying endangered Siberian tigers. (R)

ITV



Keith Lemon hosts Through the Christmas Keyhole, 11.20pm

6.00 CITY: Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) 6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Dino Dan (R) 6.40 Sooty (R) 6.50 Bookaboo 7.05 Horrid Henry (R) 7.20 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.55 Bottom Knockers Street 8.10 Bottom Knockers Street 8.25 Dinner Date David from Essex chooses three blind dates from five potential partners. Narrated by Charlotte Hudson. 9.25 FILM: Problem Child (1990) Comedy, starring John Ritter. *** 11.00 FILM: The Flintstones (1994) Live-action version of the cartoon comedy, with John Goodman. *** 12.45 ITV News and Weather 1.05 FILM: Casper (1995) Family comedy, starring Christina Ricci. ***

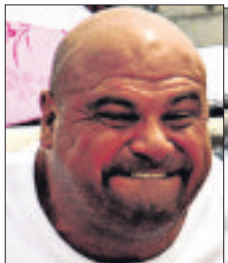
CH4



Come Dine with Me: Comedians Christmas Special, 4.35pm

6.15 FILM: Mysterious Island (1961) Sci-fi adventure, starring Michael Craig. *** 8.00 Morning Line A look ahead to today's meeting at Kempton Park. 9.00 Frasier Part two of two. Niles is suspected of being an accomplice to murder. (R) 9.30 Frasier Lilith and Frasier are set up on a blind date. (R) 10.00 The Big Bang Theory Howard gets caught in a strange argument. (R) 10.30 FILM: The King and I (1956) Oscar-winning musical, starring Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr. *** 1.05 Channel 4 Racing Clare Balding and Nick Luck present live coverage of five races from Kempton Park and Wetherby, including the 3.10 King George VI Chase.

CH5



Laurence Shalaei, World's Strongest Man 2013 on at 8.15pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.45 World's Strongest Man 2013: Qualifiers (R) 10.45 Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas The haulage company's most memorable festive moments. (R) 11.45 World's Most Pampered Pets Documentary about people who spoil their pets. 12.45 FILM: High Society (1956) Complications arise when a playboy composer tries to stop his ex-wife from marrying another man. Romantic musical comedy, starring Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. *** 2.55 FILM: Meet Me in St Louis (1944) A close-knit family is worried that a prospective move to New York will mean missing out on the 1904 World's Fair. Musical, starring Judy Garland, Tom Drake and Margaret O'Brien. ***

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

4.05 Cars 2 (2011) Premiere. Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Owen Wilson. ***

5.45 BBC News

6.00 Midlands Today; Weather.

6.05 Gangsta Granny Family comedy based on David Walliams' book about a law-breaking OAP who takes her bored grandson on a crime spree. Julia McKenzie, Joanna Lumley and Rob Brydon star.

7.15 EastEnders Phil is in for a surprise when new Vic landlord Mick makes his presence felt. Max finds Lauren and Jake together and Joey gets bad news from the prison.

7.45 Still Open All Hours David Jason returns as Granville in this one-off special of Roy Clarke's popular comedy, now running the shop with his son after inheriting the business from Arkwright.

8.15 Death Comes to Pemberley New series. Anna Maxwell Martin, Matthew Rhys and Jenna Coleman star in this sequel to Pride and Prejudice, adapted from the best-selling novel by PD James, which brings Jane Austen's world back to life in a highly original way - with a murder mystery plot at its centre. Continues tomorrow.

9.20 Len Goodman's Perfect Christmas Strictly Come Dancing judge Len Goodman takes a trip through the TV archives, choosing a series of small-screen clips to demonstrate his idea of the perfect Christmas Day.

10.00 BBC News

10.15 Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day Gary Lineker introduces highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester City v Liverpool and Hull City v Manchester United.

11.55 Have I Got a Bit More 2013: News for You Extended highlights from this year's editions, revisiting how Paul Merton, Ian Hislop and a variety of guests took on the big news stories of 2013. Last in the series.

12.40 Skiing Weatherview 12.45 BBC News

3.00 Operation Snow Tiger Part two of two. Liz Bonnin searches for a tiger that has gone missing. (R)

4.00 Final Score A round-up of this afternoon's football results.

5.15 You Have Been Watching - David Croft A tribute to the TV comedy writer. (R)

6.15 Dad's Army (1971) The Home Guard soldiers are put on their mettle as they get ready to capture three German aviators. British comedy based on the TV series, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. ***

7.45 Christmas University Challenge Alumni from the colleges of Gonville & Caius, Cambridge, and Christ Church, Oxford, compete, with Andrew Graham-Dixon and Michael Dobbs among the contestants.

8.15 Idris Elba - King of Speed Part one of two. Documentary in which the Luther star embarks on an international journey to explore the history of car racing while sampling the thrill of competition vehicles.

9.15 Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert Part one of two. Four years after On Thin Ice - their Antarctic expedition for BBC Two - James Cracknell and Ben Fogle reunite to attempt an unguided crossing of a portion of the Rub' al Khali desert - also known as the Empty Quarter. The duo are following in the footsteps of British explorer Wilfred Thesiger, who travelled extensively in the region between 1945 and 1949 and earned the nickname of Mubarak bin London from the Bedouin tribes.

10.15 King Arthur (2004) A Roman commander in fifth-century Britain comes to realise his true destiny is to lead the people against Saxon invaders. Adventure, starring Clive Owen and Keira Knightley. ***

12.10 FILM: Dracula (1958) Hammer horror, starring Christopher Lee. *** 1.30 FILM: Sign Zone: Jane Eyre (2011) Period drama, starring Mia Wasikowska. *** 3.20 This Is BBC 2

3.00 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 - Behind the Magic Ben Shephard interviews the stars of the film. (R)

4.00 Off Their Rockers A pensioner's wheelchair is stolen. Last in the series. (R)

4.30 The Nation's Favourite Elvis Song A countdown of the King's 20 greatest hits, as voted for by the public, featuring contributions by stars he influenced and an interview with his ex-wife Priscilla Presley. (R)

6.00 ITV News and Weather

6.15 Emmerdale Hour-long episode. At Home Farm, the fire is raging and Charity tries to get Declan to leave. Eventually, they flee the grounds, but Megan rushes inside - and becomes trapped.

7.15 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010) Premiere. The dark lord Voldemort rises to ultimate power over the magical world, so the teenage wizard and his friends set out on a mission to find the magical horcruxes - artefacts containing parts of the evil wizard's soul that hold the key to destroying him. The first half of the two-part conclusion to the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Ralph Fiennes, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint. ***

10.05 I Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears in Las Vegas Documentary following the pop star as she prepares for her performance residency in Las Vegas, revealing how she handles the pressures that come with the next chapter of her career.

11.05 ITV News and Weather

11.20 Through the Christmas Keyhole Keith Lemon returns with a festive rummage through the homes of three mystery celebrities, challenging regular panellist Dave Berry and guests to guess their identities. (R)

12.20 FILM: The Affair of the Necklace (2001) Period drama, starring Hilary Swank. *** 2.20 FILM: Inland Empire (2006) Mystery drama, starring Laura Dern. *** 5.20 ITV Nightscreen

3.35 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.

4.35 Come Dine with Me: Comedians Christmas Special Sean Hughes, Gina Yashere, Paul Tonkinson and Duncan Norvelle compete. (R)

5.35 Hollyoaks The Roscoes have more than one reason to celebrate as Christmas Day arrives. Fraser worries when Grace goes missing, and plans are put into action to steal Mercedes' new fortune.

6.05 Channel 4 News

6.15 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.

6.20 Independence Day (1996) A fleet of huge flying saucers launches a devastating and unprovoked attack on Earth. As survivors try to flee the seemingly unstoppable alien invaders, the courageous US president, an ace pilot and a computer genius come up with a plan to take the fight to the enemy and save the human race. Roland Emmerich's sci-fi adventure, starring Will Smith, Bill Pullman, Jeff Goldblum, Mary McDonnell, Randy Quaid and Harry Connick Jr. ***

9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2013 Jimmy Carr poses questions about the major events of the year to Jack Whitehall, Jonathan Ross, Dara O Briain, Kristen Schaal, Noel Fielding and Richard Ayoade.

11.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special The comedian hosts a show filled with festive fun and frolics, joined by actor and comedian Russell Brand, presenters Davina McCall and David Dickinson, and girl group Little Mix, who perform their new single Little Me. Last in the series. (R)

12.10 FILM: Machete (2010) Action thriller, starring Danny Trejo. *** 2.00 FILM: Legend (1985) Fantasy adventure, with Tom Cruise. *** 3.35 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun (R) 4.35 Secret Removers 5.30 Suburgatory 5.55 Suburgatory

5.15 The Wizard of Oz (1939) A tornado whisks a girl off to a magical land where she embarks on a journey in search of the wizard who knows the way home. Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland and Ray Bolger. ***

7.15 Michael Buble's Christmas Special The Grammy-winning Canadian crooner performs classic festive songs in his third annual Christmas special, with soul and R'n'B singer Mary J Blige joining him on numbers including Run, Run Rudolph.

8.15 World's Strongest Man 2013 James Richardson presents action from the opening heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China, where the top two of six competitors would progress to the final. Britain's Strongest Man Laurence Shalaei was among those involved, along with American duo Robert Oberst and Nick Best, with disciplines including the Truck Pull and the Atlas Stones.

9.15 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs A countdown of popular songs that are guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing. Highlights include the Jackson 5's Santa Claus Is Coming to Town, Greg Lake's I Believe in Father Christmas, the Waitresses' Christmas Wrapping and the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's Fairytale of New York. Is Mud's Lonely This Christmas past its sell-by date? Will Jona Lewie ever Stop the Cavalry? And where would any Christmas party be without Slade and their classic anthem Merry Xmas Everybody? But which one will top the nation's festive chart? Featuring contributions by artists, producers, video directors, composers and journalists, who shed light on the creation of the songs and their accompanying videos. (R)

12.10 Michael Buble's Christmas Special (R) 1.10 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights 3.55 House Doctor (R) 4.20 House Doctor (R) 4.45 Great Artists (R) 5.10 Nick's Quest (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

Friday 27 December

BBC 1



Mick lets Shirley and Tina move into the Vic in EastEnders, 8.00pm

6.00 Breakfast 8.20 Match of the Day (R) 9.50 FILM: 102 Dalmatians (2000) Disney family adventure sequel, starring Glenn Close. ★★
11.25 FILM: Bedtime Stories (2008) Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler. ★★ ★★
1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Regional News: Weather. 1.25 Open All Hours: A Celebration The enduring appeal of the classic comedy. **1.55 Len Goodman's Perfect Christmas** Festive TV clips chosen by the Strictly judge. (R) **2.35 FILM: Enchanted (2007)** A fairy-tale princess is magically transported from her cartoon world to modern-day New York. Part-animated fantasy comedy, starring Amy Adams, James Marsden and Susan Sarandon. ★★

BBC 2



David Attenborough explores the continent's wildlife in Africa, 9.30am

6.00 This Is BBC 2 6.30 Natural World: Tiger Dynasty (R) 7.30 Sign Zone: Great Continental Railway Journeys (R) 8.30 Sign Zone: Africa 2013: Countdown to the Rains The rains finally arrive and the grazing animals spread out across the valley. Last in the series. (R) **9.30 Africa** David Attenborough explores the continent's wildlife and landscape. (R) **10.30 Earthflight (R) 11.30 FILM: War and Peace (1956)** Historical drama, starring Audrey Hepburn. ★★ ★★
2.50 FILM: How the West Was Won (1962) Three generations of a pioneer family experience many ordeals as they try to build a life for themselves on the American frontier. Epic Western, starring James Stewart and John Wayne. ★★

ITV



Harry Hill narrates You've Been Framed! shown at 8.00pm

6.00 CITY: Babar and the Adventures of Badou (R) 6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Dino Dan (R) 6.40 Sooty (R) 6.50 Bookaboo 7.05 Horrid Henry (R) 7.20 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.40 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.55 Bottom Knockers Street 8.10 Bottom Knockers Street 8.25 Dinner Date Russell from Essex takes part in the dating show. (R) **9.25 Murder, She Wrote A ventriloquist is accused of murder. (R) **10.25 Dickinson's Real Deal (R) 11.25 FILM: Batteries Not Included (1987)** Sci-fi fantasy, starring Jessica Hahn. ★★ ★★
1.25 ITV News and Weather 1.35 ITV News Central: Weather. 1.40 FILM: Step Up (2006) Musical romance, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. ★★**

CH4



Noel Edmonds hosts Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas, 3.15pm

6.15 Suburgatory 6.40 According to Jim (R) 7.05 According to Jim (R) 7.30 Will & Grace (R) 7.55 Will & Grace (R) 8.20 FILM: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Dominic Cooper. ★★ ★★
10.00 The Big Bang Theory Penny considers breaking up with Leonard. (R) **10.30 The Big Bang Theory** Sheldon hires an attractive female assistant. (R) **10.55 The Simpsons** Homer wakes up to find his family missing. (R) **11.25 The Simpsons** Mayor Quimby brings election day forward. (R) **11.55 FILM: Aliens in the Attic (2009)** Children's sci-fi comedy, starring Carter Jenkins. ★★ ★★
1.35 FILM: Dr Dolittle (1998) Comedy, starring Eddie Murphy. ★★

CH5



The hapless hero bags a bargain in Do It Yourself Mr Bean, 9.30pm

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 World's Strongest Man 2013 The opening heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China. (R) **11.00 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Cracker** The truckers deliver a consignment of reindeer for a Christmas parade. (R) **12.00 FILM: 633 Squadron (1964)** RAF pilots are sent to bomb a German rocket-fuel plant, but the capture of a resistance fighter threatens the plan. Second World War drama, with Cliff Robertson and George Chakiris. ★★ ★★
1.50 FILM: Zulu Dawn (1979) Fact-based historical drama, charting events leading to the massacre of more than 1,500 British soldiers at Isandlwana. Prequel to Zulu, starring Burt Lancaster and Peter O'Toole. Edited for violence and language. ★★

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

4.10 Megamind (2010) Premiere. Animated superhero comedy, with the voice of Will Ferrell. ★★

5.40 BBC News: Weather. 5.55 Midlands Today: Weather.

6.05 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008) The globe-trotting archaeologist races against Soviet agents to find a mysterious artefact of untold power. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford and Cate Blanchett. ★★

8.00 EastEnders Linda is livid with Mick for letting his sisters move into the Vic, and bonds with Sharon over their mutual dislike of Shirley. Peter finds the money Cindy stole from Phil.

8.30 Miranda The shop owner's friends accuse her of being immature so she sets out to prove them wrong – first by looking after a toddler, then by hosting a grown-up dinner party. (R)

9.00 Death Comes to Pemberley Darcy retreats into a version of his younger self as the fallout from Wickham's arrest threatens his marriage, and Louisa Bidwell's unforeseen revelation adds to his wife's anxiety. Concludes tomorrow.

10.00 BBC News 10.15 Regional News: Weather; National Lottery Update

10.20 Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special The first of two festive editions. Mrs Brown tries to find out what her grandson wants for Christmas and loses her temper at the family games night when no one plays by her rules. (R)

11.00 Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee and the gang spend Christmas in a spooky country house. (R)

11.45 John Bishop's Christmas Show Festive giggles featuring Jason Manford, Nina Conti, David O'Doherty and Tim Vine. (R)

12.45 FILM: The Lonely Guy (1984) Comedy, with Steve Martin and Charles Grodin. ★★ **2.10 Weatherview 2.15 BBC News**

5.15 Flog It! From National Museum Cardiff. (R)

6.00 Celebrity Eggheads Derek Jacobi, Frances Barber, Neil Dudgeon, Fiona Laird and Emma Fielding take on the general knowledge champions. Hosted by Dermot Mulroney. (R)

6.30 The Choir: Sing While You Work The three remaining choirs face their biggest challenge as they perform a song composed by Paul Mealar at Ely Cathedral, before one is picked as the winner. Last in the series. (R)

7.30 Christmas University Challenge Distinguished graduates of St Hugh's College, Oxford, compete with those of the University of Stirling, with Suzy Klein and Paul Lewis among the contestants.

8.00 Idris Elba - King of Speed Part two of two. The Luther star examines the importance of precision driving skills in motorsports, learning the art of rallying from former world champion Ari Vatanen.

9.00 Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert Part two of two. James Cracknell and Ben Fogle continue their expedition across the Arabian Desert. As they try to pick up the pace, disaster strikes when one of them suffers a serious injury, leading to further delays – although it does allow them to reflect on their friendship.

10.00 Cast Away (2000) A manager for a courier service has to fend for himself when a plane crash leaves him stranded alone on a desert island. Initially panic-stricken, he overcomes his terror to survive for four years on his own before building a raft and setting off on an epic journey back home. Adventure drama, starring Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt, Nick Searcy, Lari White and Chris Noth. ★★

12.15 Ambassadors (R) 1.15 FILM: The Mummy (1999) Hammer horror, starring Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. ★★ **2.40 Sign Zone: Imagine - Who's Afraid of Machiavelli? (R) 3.40 Sign Zone: Waiting for Gaga: A Culture Show Special (R) 4.40 This Is BBC 2**

3.45 The Chase With Lorraine Kelly, Craig Charles, Jamelia and Don Joly.

4.45 Downton Abbey The Crawleys are implicated in a scandal that threatens to engulf the royal family. Last in the series. (R)

6.35 ITV News Central: Weather.

6.45 ITV News and Weather 7.00 Emmerdale Robbie becomes suspicious of Charity and Declan at the hospital, so she returns to Home Farm planning to delete the CCTV footage, but what she views gives her food for thought.

7.30 Coronation Street Hayley waits nervously for the results of her scan, Nick admits to causing Leanne's black eye, and Maddie owns up to the theft of Sally's handbag.

8.00 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from cute kids and crazy animals to pranks and painful-looking accidents. (R)

8.30 Coronation Street Hayley breaks down and lashes out at Roy, David is concerned when a despondent Kylie returns to No 8, and Nick makes a decision that has repercussions for Leanne.

9.00 Vicious A festive edition of the comedy starring Ian McKellen and Derek Jacobi. Freddie and Stuart invite friends round for a Christmas Day celebration at their flat.

9.35 Bridget Jones's Diary (2001) A woman begins a new year by resolving to find love and give up her bad habits. Romantic comedy based on Helen Fielding's novel, with Renee Zellweger, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. ★★

11.20 ITV News at Ten and Weather: Weather.

11.35 The Cube A childminder and a Londoner take up the challenge, aiming to complete tasks within the confines of the cube to win a jackpot of £250,000. Hosted by Phillip Schofield. (R)

12.25 Jackpot247 Interactive gaming. **3.00 FILM: The Majestic (2001)** Drama, starring Jim Carrey. ★★ **5.30 ITV Nightscreen**

3.15 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.

4.15 Come Dine with Me Christmas Special With Jona Lewie, Maizie Williams, VV Brown and Toby Anstis. (R)

5.20 The Simpsons Homer reminisces about the time he was in a band. (R)

5.50 Hollyoaks Freddie tries to save a loved one from the village's most dangerous residents.

6.20 Hollyoaks Freddie races to save a loved one from a grisly fate.

6.50 Channel 4 News 7.00 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.

7.05 Gordon Ramsay's Home Cooking With the help of his children, the chef prepares some of his favourite hot and spicy festive recipes, including Mexican eggs, noodle soup and aromatic whole crispy roast duck.

8.00 Celebrity Come Dine with Me Actress Dannella Westbrook, choreographer Louie Spence, 1980s pop star Sinitta and Hugo Taylor from Made in Chelsea get into the party spirit in a festive celebrity special.

9.00 The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) Awkward teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday – but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison. ★★

10.55 Queer as Pop: From the Gay Scene to the Mainstream Documentary revealing how the social and political liberation of gay men has inspired and influenced the music mainstream over the past 40 years.

11.55 Chit: iTunes Festival Special Lauren Laverne introduces footage from the group's performance at the music event at London's Roundhouse.

12.55 Kylie Minogue: Showgirl - Live At Earls' Court 1.55 FILM: The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) ★★ 3.35 90210 4.15 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun (R) 5.10 SuperScripps 5.20 Deal or No Deal (R)

4.10 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968) Children's musical adventure, starring Dick Van Dyke. ★★

7.00 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Delivery Festive edition of the documentary, in which the company's truckers battle winter conditions to ensure shops and councils receive their supply of Christmas trees and salt. (R) **5 News Update**

8.00 World's Strongest Man 2013 James Richardson presents the second heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China, featuring six competitors looking to finish in the top two and make it through to the final. **5 News at 9**

9.00 Merry Christmas Mr Bean The hapless hero plans the Christmas holiday of a lifetime – but fate intervenes and pulls the rug out from under his feet, reducing what should have been the perfect festive season to a frantic comedy of errors. Slapstick, starring Rowan Atkinson. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

9.30 Do It Yourself Mr Bean The hapless hero's party falls flat, but he finds an ingenious way to beat the sales queues and bag a bargain. Slapstick comedy, starring Rowan Atkinson. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

10.00 Tommy Cooper's Christmas A seasonal special from 1973, featuring comedy sketches, magic and guest appearances by Sacha Distel and Clodagh Rodgers, who perform a medley of festive favourites. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

11.05 The Plank (1967) Two clumsy workmen carry a plank to a building site, causing various mishaps and accidents along the way. Slapstick comedy, directed by and starring Eric Sykes. With Tommy Cooper. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. ★★

12.15 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights 3.50 Motorsport Mundial 4.20 House Doctor (R) 4.45 Great Artists (R) 5.10 Nick's Quest (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

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FESTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

A giant of a show to mark 75th year of Rep festive fun

WITH 75 years of pantomimes and performances under their belt, Oldbury Rep's production of Jack and the Beanstalk promises to be a giant of a family panto.

This production of the well known fairytale has been written by Alan Wood, the group's longest serving member.

The group celebrated its 75th anniversary this year and has performed more than 400 shows over the years.

This is the fifth time the theatre has put on Jack and the Beanstalk since their first production in 1978.

It runs from Friday, January 10, to Saturday, January 18.

Tickets for adults are £10, concessions £9. Call 0121 552 2761 or visit the www.oldburyrep.org website.

It's Mother Goose for Stourbridge

STOURBRIDGE Pantomime Company are once again treading the boards in a seasonal favourite.

The group, which has been going since 1969, will present classic panto Mother Goose for Stourbridge Town Hall following a successful production of Cinderella last year.

In 2011 the group won the best pantomime in the Black Country award at the national Operatic and Dramatic Association West Midlands ceremony.

Mother Goose runs from January 18 to 25. Tickets are adults £13, concessions £9.

Call 01384 836963 or see the www.stourbridgepanto.co.uk website.

How to look good in panto

HE'S used to telling us how to look good naked but Gok Wan will swap fashion for panto fun to star in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at Birmingham Hippodrome.

The TV fashion guru plays the Man in the Mirror,

Joanne an evil queen at Garrick



Joanne Malin plays the villainous Queen Eviline

A TRADITIONAL panto with audience participation returns to The Garrick Theatre with TV newsreader Joanne Malin as Queen Eviline in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

The Lichfield theatre is celebrating 10 years of panto.

The show runs until Sunday, January 5. Tickets are £22.50 or £29 for adults, and £13.50 or £12.50 for children.

Contact 01543 412121 or see www.lichfieldgarrick.com

and stars alongside East-Enders actor John Partridge, who is best known for playing Christian in the BBC soap, as Prince Charming.

The star-studded cast also includes television and film legend Stephanie Beacham, who appeared in *Dynasty*, and who will take to the stage as The Wicked Queen.

Song and dance man Gary Wilmot will also star in the show in his first appearance as a panto dame.

Costumes

Danielle Hope, aged 21, who won the BBC's talent show *Over the Rainbow*, to appear as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* at the London Palladium will be taking the role of Snow White.

No actual dwarfs will be appearing in the show though, with the magnificent seven being played by physical theatre actors wearing special costumes to make them look small. The production runs from Thursday, December 19 to Sunday, February 2.

Ticket prices range from £12 to £39.

For further details contact 0844 338 5000 or visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Hollyoaks star lines up at Prince of Wales



The cast of *Aladdin* at Cannock's Prince of Wales Centre will be headed up by Keith De Winter as Widow Twankey

IT'S a long way from Hollyoaks but Darren Langford is not complaining as he looks forward to a season of panto puns and costume excesses.

The actor, best known for playing Spencer Gray in the long-running Channel 4 soap, takes the role of the Emperor of China in *Aladdin* at the Prince of Wales Centre in Cannock.

"When I was young I was taken to pantos at the local working men's clubs and I loved them but as an actor I never thought of performing in them," he said. "But I did my first four years ago and now I couldn't imagine not doing a

panto at Christmas. As an actor it's the most showbizzy it gets - all that glitter and glitz, it's fantastic.

"On top of that you always get good audiences and the theatre is buzzing.

"I wasn't used to the short rehearsal time though, so was scared to death when I first started. It's got better since then."

The cast will include 11 local youngsters from Rugeley-based Studio 5 Stage School who started rehearsing for their song and dance routines last month.

Theatre manager Richard Kay said

that following audience feedback, the show is opening a couple of days earlier this year. He said: "We normally launched the panto on Christmas Eve and finished in the new year but people wanted more shows this side of Christmas so we have responded. It's always a great time of year in the theatre.

"And I always insist on a traditional panto with a dame and a baddie with all the audience responses."

Aladdin runs for eight days from December 22-30 with matinees every day except Christmas Day, plus four evening shows.

Jungle King Joe gets in a Muddle at Grand Theatre

WOLVERHAMPTON'S Grand Theatre has launched *Sleeping Beauty* which continues until January 18 starring comedian and former King of the I'm a Celebrity jungle Joe Pasquale as Muddles.

He is joined by former Coronation Street star Lucy Evans as Princess Beauty, while international cabaret artist and variety star Ceri Dupree will showcase a colourful array of frocks as he takes on the role of Queen Pasionella.

Bosses at the Lichfield Street theatre say they hope it will become the biggest pantomime there yet.

It runs until January 18. Ticket prices range from £16.50 to £26.50. Concessions are available on 01902 429212 or at www.grandtheatre.info

Dick Whittington turning to Forest

NOW in its fifth year at the Leamore venue, the Forest Arts Centre's panto has become the biggest in Walsall.

The show features professional actors alongside members of Walsall Youth Theatre, also based at the Hawthush Road venue.

Dick Whittington runs until this Sunday. Tickets are £6. Call 0845 111 2898 or see www.forestartscentre.co.uk

The fairytale of the girl who can't get out of bed is the panto choice at Stafford's Gatehouse Theatre until January 11.

The show has a rock and roll twist, with music performed live on stage from a cast of performers.

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Motoring

Compiled by Motoring
Editor Sharon Walters

Mercedes is fastest growing premium brand

MERCEDES-BENZ UK's record registration year continues, with the company reporting its best-ever results, according to the latest figures released by SMMT.

The company is still the fastest-growing premium brand in the UK car market, with registrations growing 19 per cent over 2012's previous records.

Passenger car registrations – at 7,813 for the month – were the best November result ever-seen, and contributed to a monthly market share of 4.9 per cent.

For the first time in its UK history, the company has

achieved more than 100,000 new car registrations in a year.

The 100,000th customer was Jamie Leigh Arndell, who collected her first Mercedes-Benz, a white A 180 CDI Sport. She joins the 16,397 drivers who have taken delivery of an A-Class so far this year.

Elsewhere, the new generation E-Class range is proving particularly popular, with all four body styles showing significant growth YTD.

E-Class Coupé is up nine per cent to 4,470 cars; E-Class Cabriolet up six per cent to 4,112; E-Class Estate shows an eight per cent rise to 4,001; whilst the E-Class Saloon is up to 14,505 new cars – an increase of 36 per cent YTD.

Deliveries of the new S-Class luxury saloon in November were almost double its nearest rival, and registrations of the new range and the run-out year of the old model are at 1,372 new cars, keeping S-Class as the most successful luxury saloon in the UK.

Performances

High performances were also reported across the company's AMG range, with 2,947 cars registered so far in 2013 – a growth of 47 per cent. The C 63 AMG remains the UK's most popular choice, with 1,522 registered this year, and more than 320 A 45 AMGs have taken to the UK's roads in 2013.

A strong month saw van registrations rise 18.5 per cent in November 2013, with Vito up 29.2 per cent to 513 units. Sprinter, with 18,488 registered YTD, reported an increase of 14.4 per cent so far this year.

Combined results mean that the vans division is looking set to have a record-breaking performance in 2013 once the year-end results are published in a month.

In trucks, deliveries of the new Antos and Arocs ranges began, but it was tractor units where the biggest success was shown.

Axor registrations were up 34.8 per cent in November, to 248 units, whilst Actros more than doubled the same month last year, with 459 units registered. So far this year, 2,713

Actros have been registered – up 42 per cent on 2012. Marcus Breitschwerdt, president and CEO Mercedes-Benz UK, said:

"November 2013 has entered Mercedes-Benz UK's history books as a real milestone.

Breaking through the 100,000 new car sales figure is a landmark achievement, helped by a strong model range – in fact we offer the widest choice of vehicles in the entire industry.

It's fantastic to see that British customers are voting with their purchase and lease choices in record numbers.

"Our success isn't confined to one part of our range though – as well as new compact cars like the A-Class and CLA, the extensive revisions we made to E-Class earlier this year have shown strong growth across all four body styles.

The car has been tailored to specifically meet UK demands and market conditions, and our engine and equipment packages are key in contributing to these numbers.

"We're also showing class-leading results in luxury and high-powered motoring, too.

"We've been in run-out of the previous S-Class for most of the year, but still lead the segment despite sales of the new model only beginning recently. And it's great to see AMG sales continuing to accelerate.

Record after record is being broken.

"Our commercial vehicles division is recovering strongly too, with our vans on the verge of a significant best-ever record performance this year.

"Market conditions have influenced the tractor segment, but as the first manufacturer to bring Euro 6 trucks to the UK, we're seeing great results in both Euro 5 and Euro 6 products."

Mr Breitschwerdt said he was confident that Mercedes-Benz UK will end the year in style. "Our significant, consistent record-breaking performance is due to a lot of factors – great products sold and serviced by a great team across our networks help of course.

"But we'd be nowhere without our customers, who have a greater choice of cars, vans and trucks than ever before."



Jamie Leigh Arndell, the 100,000th customer in 2013



The E-Class range is doing well



Sprinter vans have seen a 14.4 per cent increase this year

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Motoring



In the 1930s Chevrolet led the way with the first sports utility called the Carryall Suburban and they are back on track with the superb new Trax

Chevrolet is on right Trax with latest SUV

By David Banner

IT was way back in the mid-1930s that Chevrolet introduced the motoring world to its very first sports utility vehicle – the Carryall Suburban. And now 78 years later, the company is making a similar impact on the compact SUV market with the dynamic looking Trax.

Entering such a fiercely competitive segment and taking on the likes of the established Nissan Qashqai and Juke is a brave move and suggests Chevrolet has every confidence in the Trax.

And why not indeed? Because this beautifully crafted model with its bold, ready-for-action stance is packed with technical wizardry, offers excellent economy and boasts driving dynamics to match.

In fact, the Trax could be the perfect model for anyone who wants all the benefits of a full-blooded SUV combined with the handling and economy of a smaller car.

The vehicle is an instant attention-grabber thanks to its elegant styling. It features muscular rear haunches, pronounced wheel arches, a rear spoiler, sweeping light clusters and a double grille with Chevrolet's iconic bowtie emblem sitting proudly in the middle.

Buyers can select from two trim levels – LS and LT – and both come with a whole host of techno treats as standard, which is a real bonus as many manufacturers rake up the asking price of vehicles with a selection of optional extras.

But that's not the case with the Trax which starts from just £15,495 and rises to £20,495.

There is a choice of engines – a 1.4-litre turbo and 1.6-litre petrol versions, and a 1.7-litre turbo diesel version.

An automatic transmission is available on the diesel Trax and all manual models are fitted with a start/stop function to maximise fuel efficiency.

In addition, many models are equipped with Chevrolet's highly efficient intelligent all-wheel-drive system which means never being caught out by one of Mother Nature's bad mood swings.

The interior is light and spacious with all dials and controls perfectly positioned for driver usability. It has an ultra-modern and chic feel to it and Chevrolet has introduced a state-of-the-art system called MyLink which means occupants can stay connected to their media devices on the go.

Capabilities

There is a very competitively-priced app that can be downloaded called BRINGGO which does exactly that and brings sat nav capabilities to the Trax. Such innovative technology is exactly what buyers demand these days and Chevrolet appears to have delivered on all counts with MyLink. So the Trax looks full of charm and charisma, has sufficient on-board technology to keep the geekish of techies amused for hours and has room to accommodate five adults with plenty of scope for luggage. In fact, the boot offers 1,370 litres of storage space with the rear seats folded flat.

But how does the Trax perform when confronted with sharp mountain inclines, fast motorways and even off-road challenges? The answer is... admirably. We put a couple of models that Chevrolet believes will be the biggest sellers through their paces and they didn't disappoint.

First up was the 1.4-litre petrol turbo model in range-topping LT trim with six-speed manual gearbox priced at £19,795. This car can reach 62mph from a standing start in 9.8 seconds and tops out at 121mph.

It can deliver 44.1mpg on a combined run and has carbon emissions of 149g/km. With ample power on tap, the Trax easily dealt with winding roads and acceleration was smooth and rapid through the gears.

There was very little roll and minimal road surface and engine noise. Comfort levels were excellent and any obstacles put in its path were overcome with ease.

We even took the vehicle off-road and it coped effortlessly with a gravelled course that included a number of tricky climbs.

Next up was the more frugal 1.7-litre turbo diesel model with its combined fuel efficiency of 57.6mpg and emissions of 129g/km. This car, again in LT trim and priced at £20,495, can sprint from 0-62mph in 9.4 seconds and has a top speed of 114mph.

Once again, this model was a pleasure to drive, albeit a little noisier than its petrol counterpart.

That aside though, this Trax boasted smooth acceleration and cruised with ease at higher motorway speeds with a seemingly endless supply of power on offer.

As one would expect, all Trax models are fitted with a comprehensive range of safety features, including anti-lock brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution, hill descent control, hill start assist, roll-over mitigation, six airbags and plenty more besides.

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Peugeot 308 aiming to be the very best in its class

WHEN a manufacturer boldly says its new car will be the best in class you know it means business – and that's just the claim from Peugeot about the new 308.

The 308 arrives in January and will be the first model in the company's history to retain the name of its predecessor, despite being a completely new car from the ground up.

And any Peugeot driver will be delighted to learn that at last the pedals have been centred. So no longer are you sat with your feet to the right. Apparently all that was needed was a redesigned air-conditioning system – why has it taken so long?

Engineers started with a blank sheet of paper and produced a 308 which is 140kg lighter than the old model and that means better performance and efficiency all round.

Such was the attention to detail that laser welding techniques were adopted to minimise weight levels.

While the 308 is attractive enough it won't see people breaking their necks for a glance as it passes by, but it's hard not to be really taken by the cabin, which gets a futuristic approach.

There's an attractive small steering wheel that you look over, instead of through, to see the clocks.

Xhed

Star place goes to the centrally mounted touch-screen which is standard on all but the entry-level trim, and features large easy-to-hit icons. It's a great piece of kit and the kids will love it. The downside is unless you are at home with this type of technology there's a lot to understand and take in.

Every action, including the heating and air con system, has to come via the touch screen and you may find yourself spending a little too much time with your eyes off the road ahead.

Top of the range models benefit from a heads-up image in front of the driver which not only tells you what speed you are travelling but also gives sat-nav instructions.

On the road there's not a lot wrong, with good handling and a comfortable ride, even when pushed to the limit.

The 114bhp 1.6 diesel manual with stop-start is the pick of the range with good gear flexibility and a much quieter ride than petrol options. Though it's worth remembering it was a top of the range Feeline e-HDi version.

Panda top mini 4x4



The capable Fiat Panda 4x4 scooped class award and almost took top spot from its bigger brothers

BRITAIN'S best-selling magazine for off-road enthusiasts, 4X4 Magazine, has named the Fiat Panda 4X4 "Winner Mini 4X4 Class" in its 2014 4X4 of the Year Awards.

The Fiat Panda 4X4 not only saw off its direct competition during the award adjudication, conducted at a dedicated and challenging off-road course in Cheshire, it also acquitted itself admirably in the final five-vehicle shootout.

In fact, so impressed were the editors of 4X4 Magazine they commented that "overall victory so nearly went to the infrequently cute, ridiculously capable...Fiat Panda 4X4." According to Nigel Fryatt, editor of 4X4 Magazine, "One of the surprises of this year's test was just how good the Fiat Panda 4x4 is."

"We used a test facility that was designed to demonstrate the abilities of far bigger – and much more expensive – vehicles. Allowing for limited ground clearance and power, we still managed to crawl the Panda over and through some significant obstacles. You needed care, and perhaps we took it further than most owners would, but that's irrelevant. The point is that the Panda 4x4 could do it, with some style."

Elena Bernardelli, Fiat UK marketing director, said: "It is remarkable that 30 years after we launched the original Fiat Panda 4X4 it remains not only a best-seller but also a favourite of the experts. That the Fiat Panda 4X4 can go toe-to-toe with so many luxury off-road vehicles proves that you don't have to sacrifice capability or practicality in order to reduce your running costs or to do your bit for the environment."

The Fiat Panda 4X4 is powered either by Fiat's award-winning 85hp TwinAir turbo petrol engine or a 75hp 1.3-litre MultiJet II turbo-diesel engine. Priced from just £13,995, it offers combined-cycle fuel economy figures of 57.6 and 60.1 MPG respectively, with CO2 emissions of just 114g/km and 125g/km.



The new 308 is lighter than the old model with better performance and many more features inside

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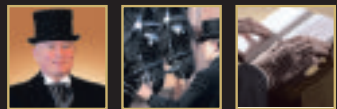
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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENT CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Please note that there is no Cannock Chronicle Christmas Week, the deadline for Thursday, January 2 will be Friday, December 27, at 12 noon.

BAKEWELL

Jeremy Joseph

(Jem)

Sadly passed away on Thursday, December 12, 2013, with his Family by his side.

Loving Brother and Uncle, he will be missed by all his Family and Friends.

Now reunited with Brothers Wink and Andy.

His Funeral Service will take place on Friday, January 3, 2014, at 2.15 pm, at Bushbury Crematorium, West Chapel.

Dress code optional.

Everyone is welcome afterwards to celebrate Jem's life at The Talbot (The Dog), Cheslyn Hay.

Family flowers only please.

Donations, if desired, for The Conifers Nursing Home. c/o



BARCLAY

Clifford Rodney

(Peter)

Passed away peacefully after a long illness December 11, 2013, aged 83 years.

Sadly missed by his Wife, Family and Friends.

Funeral Service will take place at Stafford Crematorium, on Monday, December 23, at 12.30pm.

Family flowers only please. Donations for Mesothelioma UK and Alzheimer's Society. c/o

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BEAMAN

Vivien Ann.

Raised to Heavenly Glory, on Sunday, December 15, aged 74 years, much loved and sadly missed by her Family and Friends.

Service at St. Stephen's Church, Bideford Way, Cannock at 12 noon on Monday, December 30, followed by Burial at Hather-ton Churchyard.

Family flowers only.

Donations to support Katharine House Hospice c/o

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CARTWRIGHT

Marion

Of Heath Hayes.

Sadly passed away December 8, at Stafford Hospital.

A very special lady who was loved by all her Family and Friends.

Her Funeral Service will take place at 2.30pm, Friday, December 20, at Stafford Crematorium.

Family flowers only but donations would be appreciated for Mencap c/o



FLOWER

Susan Joan

God saw you getting weary, He did what He thought best. He put His arms around you and whispered come to rest. Love, Mom, David, Jenae and Ian, Stacie and Chris and Kieran.

FLOWER

Susan Joan

(Sue)

nee Bott

Passed away peacefully, December 13, 2013, at home surrounded by her loving Family, aged 52.

Sue will be very sadly missed by her loving Husband Ernie, Son James, Mum Joan, Brother David, Nieces Jenae and Stacie and All Family and Friends.

Funeral Service to take place, 9.45am, on Monday, December 23, 2013, at St Augustine's Church, Rugeley, followed by Burial at Stile Cop Cemetery. By request family flowers only.

Donations requested for Katharine House Hospice and St Giles Hospice c/o

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GRICE

Gwendoline

Sadly passed away on Saturday, December 7, 2013.

Much loved by Family and Friends, she will be missed by all who knew her.

The Funeral Service will take place on Friday, December 20, 2013, at St. Luke's Church, Cannock, at 11.00 a.m. followed by a Cremation at Stafford Crematorium and afterwards at The Conservative Club, Cannock.

Family flowers only please.

Donations, if desired, for British Heart Foundation. c/o



HALL

Doreen

One year December 24.

We watched you getting weaker as the hours went by, it broke our hearts to lose you and we couldn't help but cry. We all stood at your bedside and you gently slipped away, we prayed for you and held your hand as you left us on that day.

Free from pain.

R.I.P.

God bless.

Love, Son Mark, Amy, Jack and Arley, Sisters, Brothers, Brothers-in-law, Nieces and Nephews.
X X X

McGRATH SENIOR

MARTIN

Passed away at home on December 11, surrounded by his loving Family.

Funeral Service will take place on Monday December 23, at St. Mary's Church, Cannock at 1pm. Family flowers only, donations to St. Giles.

Friends welcome afterwards at Cannock Social Club.

WHITEHOUSE

Eric

Brother

Memories lasting till the end of time. A wonderful Brother I'm proud He was mine.

God Bless

Sister Mary.

in memoriam

AINGER

Aaron

Our wonderful Son

April 7, 1988 to December 27, 2008.

If we could have one more lifetime wish, one dream that could come true, we'd ask with all our hearts for yesterday and you.

Aaron, we love and miss you every second of every day, that love will bind us for eternity.

Love, Mum and Jed.

X X

Our Brother

Five years without you.

It has and never will be the same.

It feels like a lifetime since we got to tell you we love you. Christmas is not Christmas without you.

Always in our hearts, little big man, love you always.

Merry Christmas.

Love, Elise and Theo.

Aaron

December 27.

You are not just a memory, or part of the past, you are ours to remember as long as life lasts.

A bond so strong it will not go away because we love and miss you more each day.

Love, brokenhearted Nan and Granddad Till.

X X

His Light Shines On

Aaron

Another sad year without you, Aaron but you are always in our thoughts and in the thread of our lives.

With love and remembrance from Viv, Karen and John.



HALL

Doreen

One year December 24.

I do not need a special day to bring you to my mind, the days I do not think of you are very hard to find.

Each morning when I awake I know that you are gone and no one knows the heartache as I try to carry on.

My heart still fills with sadness and secret tears still flow, what it meant to lose you no one will ever know.

My thoughts are always with you, your place no one can fill, in life I loved you dearly, in death I love you still.

Love, John and Family.

X X X

in memoriam

(christmas)

MYRING

Yvonne

One Year December 26.

Loving Wife, my heart still aches with sadness my tears still fall.

In my heart you hold a place that no-one can ever replace. But not having you here is the hardest part of all.

Your Loving Husband Colin

XXX

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

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10 Personals

personal

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Department for Transport

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

THE SECRETARY OF STATE hereby gives notice of the proposal to make an Order under section 247 of the above Act to authorise the stopping up of a western part width of Hill Street at Hedsnesford, in the District of Cannock Chase.

IF THE ORDER IS MADE, the stopping up will be authorised only in order to enable development as permitted by Cannock Chase District Council, under reference CH/13/0259.

COPIES OF THE DRAFT ORDER AND RELEVANT PLAN will be available for inspection during normal opening hours at Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1BG in the 28 days commencing on 19 December 2013, and may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State (quoting NATTRAN/WMS247/1196) at the address stated below.

ANY PERSON MAY OBJECT to the making of the proposed order within the above period by writing to the Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7AR or nationalcasework@dtf.gsi.gov.uk, quoting the above reference. In submitting an objection it should be noted that your personal data and correspondence will be passed to the applicant to enable your objection to be considered. If you do not wish your personal data to be forwarded, please state your reasons when submitting your objection.

Denise Hoggins
Department for Transport

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 (AS AMENDED) ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991 PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 12, RUGLEY TOWN TEMPORARY CLOSURE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Staffordshire County Council intend, not less than seven days from the date of this Notice, to make an Order the effect of which will be to prohibit any pedestrian from proceeding along that length of Public Footpath No. 12, Rugley Town, which runs from its junction with Public Footpath No. 8, Rugley Town in a generally south-easterly direction for a distance of approximately 455 metres to its junction with Public Footpath No. 11, Rugley Town. The closure is required because of the likelihood of danger to the public using the path due to allowance of works to be undertaken adjacent to Siltling Mill Pumping Station, Rugley by South Staffs Water.

An alternative route is available via the path network to the west of Public Footpath No. 12, Rugley Town.

A plan will be displayed showing the length of public footpath to be closed and unaffected rights of way in the area.

THIS ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 13 JANUARY 2014 AND WILL REMAIN IN FORCE FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS OR UNTIL THE RISK OF DANGER TO THE PUBLIC IS CONSIDERED TO BE OVER, WHICHEVER IS THE EARLIER. IF NECESSARY, AFTER SIX MONTHS, THE ORDER MAY BE EXTENDED FOR A FURTHER PERIOD WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

John Tradewell, Director of Law & Governance
1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, ST16 2LH

Ref: PFAM 206; Enquiries: Mr P Rochford; Tel: 0300 111 8000
Date: 19 December 2013

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 HUNTINGTON TERRACE ROAD, CANNOCK DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council, on 17 December 2013, made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Huntington Terrace Road, Cannock between its junctions with Albert Street and Cannock Road unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

The preferred alternative route for traffic will be available via Cannock Road, Arthur Street, Huntington Terrace Road and vice versa.

THE ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 12 JANUARY 2014, AND THE SAID WORKS WILL COME ON OR AS NEAR AS PRACTICABLE TO THAT DATE. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE WORKS WILL TAKE PLACE AS FOLLOWS:

Sunday 12th January 2014
Saturday 18th January 2014 until Sunday 19th January 2014
Saturday 25th January 2014 until Sunday 26th January 2014
Saturday 1st February 2014 until Sunday 2nd February 2014.

(Works will take place between the hours of 9am and 5pm on the dates above)

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the carriageway resurfacing works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road, have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation
No. 1 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP

Ref: S24540; Enquiries: Mr Simon Richards; Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders

Date: 19 December 2013

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 CANNOCK ROAD AND HEDNESFORD ROAD, CANNOCK DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council, on 17 December 2013, made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Cannock Road and Hedsnesford Road, Cannock between its junctions with A4601 Old Hedsnesford Road and Old Fallow Road unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

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Call John on 07508 839733



The preferred alternative route for traffic will be available as follows;

For vehicles travelling in a northerly direction: A4601 Old Hedsnesford Road, A460 East Cannock Road, Stafford Lane and Cannock Road.
For vehicles travelling in a southerly direction: Cemetery Road, Pye Green Road, A34 Stafford Road, A34 Ringway, A4601 Church Street and A4601 Old Hedsnesford Road.

THE ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 06 JANUARY 2014, AND THE SAID WORKS WILL COME ON OR AS NEAR AS PRACTICABLE TO THAT DATE. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE WORKS WILL TAKE PLACE AS FOLLOWS:

Monday 06th January 2014 until Saturday 11th January 2014
Monday 13th January 2014 until Friday 17th January 2014
Monday 20th January 2014 until Friday 24th January 2014

(The works will take place between the hours of 9am and 5pm on the dates above)

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the carriageway resurfacing works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road, have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation
No. 1 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP

Ref: S24535; Enquiries: Mr Simon Richards; Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders

Date: 19 December 2013

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 OLD FALLOW ROAD, CANNOCK DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council, on 17 December 2013, made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Old Fallow Road, Cannock between its junctions with Field Street and Cannock Road unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

The preferred alternative route for traffic will be available via Field Street, Short Street, Cannock Road and vice versa.

THE ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 12 JANUARY 2014, AND THE SAID WORKS WILL COME ON OR AS NEAR AS PRACTICABLE TO THAT DATE. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE WORKS WILL TAKE PLACE AS FOLLOWS:

Sunday 12th January 2014
Saturday 18th January 2014 until Sunday 19th January 2014
Saturday 25th January 2014 until Sunday 26th January 2014
Saturday 1st February 2014 until Sunday 2nd February 2014.

(The works will take place between the hours of 9am and 5pm on the dates above)

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the carriageway resurfacing works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road, have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation
No. 1 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP

Ref: S24538; Enquiries: Mr Simon Richards; Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders

Date: 19 December 2013

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 CEMETERY ROAD, CANNOCK DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council, on 17 December 2013, made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Cemetery Road, Cannock between its junctions with Victoria Street and Cannock Road unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be maintained.

The preferred alternative route for traffic will be available as follows:

For vehicles travelling in a northerly direction: Cemetery Road, Pye Green Road, Belt Road, Cannock Road.

For vehicles travelling in a westerly direction: Cannock Road, Hedsnesford Road, A4601 Hedsnesford Road, A4601 Church Street, A34 Ringway, A34 Stafford Road, Pye Green Road, Cemetery Road.

THE ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 12 JANUARY 2014, AND THE SAID WORKS WILL COME ON OR AS NEAR AS PRACTICABLE TO THAT DATE. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE WORKS WILL TAKE PLACE AS FOLLOWS:

Sunday 12th January 2014
Saturday 18th January 2014 until Sunday 19th January 2014
Saturday 25th January 2014 until Sunday 26th January 2014
Saturday 1st February 2014 until Sunday 2nd February 2014.

(The works will take place between the hours of 9am and 5pm on the days above)

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the carriageway resurfacing works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road, have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation
No. 1 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP

Ref: S24539; Enquiries: Mr Simon Richards; Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders

Date: 19 December 2013

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 STATION ROAD, CANNOCK DIVERSION OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC AND TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF FOOTWAY

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council, on 10 December 2013, made an Order the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in that length of Station Road, Cannock so much as passes over and is in the immediate vicinity of the railway bridge for a distance of approximately 20 metres either side unless the vehicle is being used in connection with the works; or unless the vehicle requires access to premises on the length of road or is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Pedestrian access will be limited to certain dates (see below).

The preferred alternative route for traffic will be available via Station Road, Station Road, Stafford Lane, A460 Unbridge Street, A460 Rugley Road, Cannock Road and vice versa.

NOTICE is hereby given that the Staffordshire County Council intend, not less than seven days from the date of this Notice, to make an Order the effect of which will be to prohibit pedestrians from proceeding on that length of Station Road, Cannock, so much as passes over and is in the immediate vicinity of the railway bridge for a distance of approximately 20 metres either side.

THE ORDER WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON 15TH DECEMBER 2013 AND WILL TAKE PLACE AS FOLLOWS:

Road Closure:

12.30am on Sunday 15th December 2013 until 06am on Sunday 15th December 2013. (Pedestrian access not available)

8pm on Saturday 21st December 2013 until 10am on Sunday 22 December 2013. (Pedestrian access not available)

8pm on Saturday 4th January 2014 until 8am on Thursday 10th April 2014. (Closure in operation 24 hours a day) Pedestrian access available except on dates when pedestrians are prohibited (see below)

Footway Pedestrians:

12.30am on Sunday 15th December 2013 until 06am on Sunday 15th December 2013.

10pm on 21st December 2013 until 10am on 22nd December 2013

10pm on 08th March 2014 until 10am on 09th March 2014

10pm on 15th March 2014 until 10am on 16th March 2014

10pm on 22nd March 2014 until 10am on 23rd March 2014

10pm on 08th April 2014 until 10am on 09th April 2014

The preferred alternative route for pedestrians will be signed on site.

The Order will remain in force for a period of 18 months or until the railway bridge reconstruction works, which it is proposed to carry out on or near the road, have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

John Tradewell, Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation
No. 1 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP

Ref: S24165; Enquiries: Mrs S. Simmonds; Tel: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/trafficregulationorders

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We are all hurting at form dip – Jackett

WOLVES coach Kenny Jackett has admitted he and his players are "hurting" at Wolves' dip in form.

Successive defeats amid two wins in eight sees Jackett keen to rally his troops as they prepare for five games in 14 days, starting at in-form Rotherham on Saturday.

Wolves have failed to score in their last two outings and have registered just seven goals in eight matches. And they return to action with top scorers Leigh Griffiths and Bakary Sako threatened to up their workrate or be axed.

"First of all it hurts to lose those games and it certainly hurts to play as poorly as we did on Saturday," said Jackett. "I'm sure the players are hurting too. It was a hard weekend and it's never nice to lose, but the most important thing for me is to learn quickly and make the right improvements."

Jackett has hinted striker Liam McAlinden, who replaced Griffiths at half-time of Saturday's 2-0 defeat against MK Dons, will continue to be used as a 'game changer' from the bench.

Lalkovic is tipped to be the X Factor

JAMES BAXENDALE is tipping Milan Lalkovic to provide the X Factor for Wolves in the coming weeks.

The Slovakian under-21 international scored his third of the campaign in Saturday's 1-0 win at Shrewsbury which snapped a four-game winless run for the Saddlers.

Baxendale believes the Chelsea loanee, whose stay at the Banks's is due to expire next month, has proved he could have a major impact over the busy festive period.

"He has scored a few goals, got a few assists and he's a real talent."

"In this league, Milan on his day will rip anyone apart. He shows in training what he has got and it's the same for the other attacking lads. Generally his performances have been really good."

Lalkovic's move from central striker to playing out wide has brought him into competition with Ashley Hemmings and Baxendale for a starting place but the latter does not mind.

Dynamo in fightback for first victory

Cannock Chase Football League Premier Cup

DYNAMO Lamb fought back from two goals down to beat Rugeley Unit 3-2 and claim their first win of the season.

Stefan Areskog and Azza Wright pulled the scores level before the winning goal from Jordan Holmes bagged the three points.

The Littleton came from behind to inflict a first defeat of the season on Ridware Oak 3-2. John Austin and Ash Rhodes levelled the scores and with 10 to go, Ricky Clifton hit the winner. Yates Sports drew 2-2 with Belt Road.

Division One

Leaders Harrison's beat Why Not 2-0 with a goal each from Sam Taylor and Jonathan Letford to inflict a first defeat of the season on the Why Not.

A first-half, headed goal from John Griffiths was enough for AFC Jubilee to beat TNT 1-0.

Division Two

AFC Slade made it four wins on the bounce by beating Ascot 3-1. Daryl Warren, Don Phillips, and Adam Dunning scored.

Lea Hall beat Hawkins Inex 3-2 with a goal each from Adam Thompson, James Wass and Alex Dailey.

Football

Cheslyn Hay beat Samson Blewitt 1-0. Title favorites Victoria Beat Victoria Ath 6-2. Dwain Battison scored a hat-trick. Steve Cook bagged two and one from Lee Charles.

Division Three

Bridgtown Social knocked Wyrley Juniors off top spot with a 3-2 win. Nick Hodgkiss hit two and Tom Dyer scored one.

Crystal Fountain take over at the top with a three all draw to Brinsford Prison. The Railway beat Castle 5-0 with a hat-trick for Barry Eagles and a goal each for John

McCarthy and Shaun Charles. The Jubilee thrashed Colliers 7-1 with four goals for Ash Bentley, two for Pete Brown and one from Mark Derby.

Winding Wheel beat Mill Farm 4-0 for their third win of the season. Ash Randle scored two and a goal each for Darrell Francis and Ash Zagerella.

Aero Taxis Cup Round One

Woody's go into the quarter finals by knocking out Cannock Ex 4-1. Adam Bartles hit two goals with a goal each for Jamie Brookes and Mark Williams.

Soldiers knocked out Pied Piper

3-2 with goals coming from Jamie Probert, Tommy Robotham and Joel Sturgess. The Nest went goal crazy putting nine past AFC Fern to knock them out 9-2. Young Ryan Pope scored a hat-trick, Mark Ellison scored two and then a goal each for Liam Price, Adam Tonks, Phil Hale and Niall Preece.

Cannock Charity Cup Round Two

Third division King George Casuals knocked out second division Trafalgar 3-5. Kevin Humpage scored two and a goal each for Nathan Hathaway, Corie Bernard and Jimmy Scragg.

Brown brilliance fires Scholars up the table

Chasetown 1 Market Drayton Town 0
A MOMENT of brilliance five minutes into the second half gave Chasetown a much-needed three points to move two places up the league table and nine clear of the bottom two.

Former West Bromwich Albion player Simon Brown received the ball in space and, when most people would have expected a drive along the ground, Brown detected enough room with Damien Stevens off his line and floated a sumptuous chip over the Market Drayton keeper that left Stevens stranded.

The visitors had started brightly, and forward Yannick Makota was showing why he was highly regarded, forcing Chasetown's back four onto the defensive to deal with his pace.

As the half progressed the standard of the game dropped and neither side looked likely to break the deadlock. The second half started better for Chasetown and a shot on target within 60 seconds of the restart from Brown was the catalyst to taking the lead four minutes later.

Market Drayton almost equalised when Martyn Davies rattled the crossbar, with the rebound netted but ruled out for an earlier offside.

The Scholars had kept just three clean sheets in the league this season so the need for a second goal was heightened. Andy Westwood came close with a shot that was easily blocked in the end as Westwood slipped slightly as he fired goalwards.

The loose ball fell to Joe

Football

Halsall who was leaning back and could only direct the ball over the bar.

Chasetown also struck the crossbar when Paul Sullivan's free kick beat Stevens but rebounded off the woodwork from 25 yards out in the inside-left channel.

A dominant defensive display from Chris Slater and Richard Teesdale blocked Market Drayton.

Despite the importance of the three points to both sides, as Chasetown leapfrogged the Shropshire side in the league table, Market Drayton substitute Martyn Davies showed great sportsmanship in the final minute.

With a Chasetown player struggling with an injury, Brown rolled the ball out of play for a throw in by the half-way line.

At first, Market Drayton took the throw quickly to retain possession but the referee asked for the throw in to be taken again.

Davies promptly kicked the ball out to return the possession to Chasetown.



Andy Westward battles away during the match-up against Shropshire outfit Market Drayton

10-man side turn screw on Lockmen

Willenhall 0 Dudley Town 4
THREADBARE. Willenhall were again reduced to a bare 11 fit players as they slipped to defeat against 10-man Dudley.

Kieron Hesson and Scott Harris both went close as Willenhall started well before a free-kick from the left on 13 minutes saw both Simon Laidley and Mattie Dorgan have efforts blocked.

With their first real chance on 17 minutes, Dudley took the lead. Rion Mills Francis was found in space on the left and he calmly lifted his shot over the advancing Steve Booth.

He then doubled Dudley's advantage 11 minutes later when he curled a shot into the corner via Booth's touch and the far post.

The Lockmen should have had a penalty on 34 minutes when Jamel Fuller was pulled back in the box. The Robins were reduced to 10 men just before the break when keeper Tom Harper was dismissed for deliberate hand-ball outside the box.

A quick break by Mills set up a his strike partner Dominik Watson to score.

Dudley rounded off the scoring when Booth made a one-handed save only to see Tom Overfield fire home the loose ball. The Reds round off this year's campaign at home against Wolverhampton Casuals on Saturday.

Marshman and Preece lose match

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Page 51

Brilliance
Victory fires the
Scholars upwards
Page 51



Pelligrino joins list of Albion possibles

FORMER Liverpool coach Mauricio Pellegrino has emerged as a contender to replace Steve Clarke after Albion made contact with Martin Jol and Andre Villas-Boas.

The Baggies have begun sounding out possible candidates via agents with former Tottenham bosses Jol and Villas-Boas believed to be among the first men assessed.

And German coach Ralf Rangnick, who almost landed the job ahead of Clarke in 2012, is expected to be considered again.

Former Argentina international Pellegrino is also understood to be on the list of coaches the Baggies plan to speak to as they sift through their options at home and abroad.

The 42-year-old former centre-back coached under Rafa Benitez at Liverpool and Inter Milan before launching his own managerial career, taking charge of Valencia briefly then moving to current club Estudiantes.

Albion seem unlikely to make a swift appointment with caretaker boss Keith Downing expected to take charge against Hull on Saturday and possibly keep the reins into the Christmas programme.

Face-to-face meetings with leading contenders are expected to be held over the coming days at Albion's London office near Mayfair.

Rallying call from Jackett

KENNY JACKETT is calling Wolves to rediscover their hunger by claiming a bumper 15-point festive haul.

The Molineux head coach sees Saturday's clash at in-form Rotherham as the ideal challenge to erase the nightmare of back-to-back defeats and a decline of two wins in eight.

"The most important thing now is to look ahead - we're looking at December 21, the 26th, the 29th and January 1 and 3," said Jackett.

"There are 15 points to play for and everyone plays exactly the same programme, which is all you ask."

"We have to get a good chunk of those 15 points."

"But we'll have to do it with a greater appetite than we showed on Saturday. We can do better going forwards, if we can just show more energy and workrate."

Hednesford's four-ce is too much for Celtic

Hednesford Town 4 Stalybridge Celtic 1

A strong second half performance by Hednesford Town put to bed a three-game losing run as they out-played Stalybridge Celtic.

The performance and eventual result had a feeling of real importance as, rightly or wrongly, the promotion credentials of Rob Smith's team had been called into question by some over the past few weeks.

The three points were extremely welcome given the fact that a number of The Pitmen's rivals were in FA Trophy action.

Paul McCone settled nerves within Keys Park with a fifth minute opener following up a rebound from his initial header which was

Football

saved by Aaron Jameson. The home side could have extended their lead but Neil Harvey, struggling for a break in front goal over recent weeks, missed two presentable opportunities, the first picking up the ball in space 12 yards out and lashing his shot over and the second a shot which hit the post.

Hednesford survived a strong penalty appeal just before half time when Phil Marsh looked to have been felled in the box but the impressive referee Sian Massey signalled for a corner and from the resulting ball in Dan Crane tipped a volleyed Kristian

Platt back heel over the bar. Nathan Woolfe was introduced at half time for Harvey, who was carrying an injury, to much expectation from the Hednesford faithful as the tricky left winger, a class above on his day, continues to search for a return to his blistering form of 12 months ago.

Before Woolfe finished Stalybridge off tricky winger Jamey Osborne advanced past two challenges and pulled the ball back perfectly for top-scorer Elliott Durrell to slam home his 22nd goal of the season on 57 minutes.

Crane was called upon to scoop a Phil Marsh header clear just after the goal but

Marsh made no mistake on 57 minutes when he nipped in front of Francino Francis and finished well.

The Pitmen struggled briefly after Stalybridge's goal with the pace of the away side but McCone underlined why he was keeping the usual pairing of Ben Bailey and Francis in centre defence apart with a very assured performance.

On 74 minutes the game was won when Woolfe curled a superb shot which Jameson could only parry to the feet of Greg Pearson and five minutes later Woolfe capped a superb second half performance with a deflected free kick.

Saddlers are back on course

Shrewsbury 0 Walsall 1

A NAGGING four-game sequence without a win had raised the familiar critique of the Saddlers being all pass and no punch.

But the season is back on course and Dean Smith's team can point to the virtues of 'keeping the faith' and sticking to his team's admirable game plan.

Five weeks on from the FA Cup mauling of Shrewsbury, the League One neighbours met again at a different venue and with Graham Turner's team fortified by the loan market.

The outcome, however, was much the same just a couple of goals shy this time.

After tormenting this opposition for four-fifths of this contest, no-one at Greenhouse Meadow on Saturday could dispute the Saddlers can lay claim to being one of the third tier's most attractive teams.

Lalkovic's very sure-footed execution of a chance set up by Sawyers and a stray Shrewsbury defender who played him and Baxendale on-side. That sent Walsall through on goal.

Lalkovic deferred the pass to his colleague as Chris Weale was drawn, rounded and a shot deposited.

MK Dons damage Wolves' chances

Wolves 0 MK Dons 2
BACK-TO-BACK defeats without scoring has at least loosened the nuts on Wolves' promotion bandwagon a little, if not seen the wheels come off.

Patrick Bamford's goal on the half hour shattered the flimsy platform Wolves' half-hearted shots had created and Ben Reeves finished the job.

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OSBORNE'S DOUBLE PUTS PITMEN TOP

Hednesford Town 2 Bradford Park Avenue 0

HEDNESFORD Town returned to the top of the Skrill North following a hard fought 2-0 victory over a determined Bradford Park Avenue side.

Goals in each half from Jamey Osborne and Ben Bailey ultimately proved the difference on the night to see The Pitmen record back-to-back league victories for the first time in a month.

As in previous matches Hednesford made a strong start to the game and they almost took the lead in the fourth minute when Nathan Woolfe saw his left-footed effort superbly saved by Bradford goalkeeper John Lamb.

The home faithful didn't have long to wait for a goal though as The Pitmen opened the scoring in the eighth minute.

Flowing

Following a flowing move, Osborne was on hand to slam the ball home from six yards out after being picked out by a low Woolfe cross.

The visitors responded well though with Town goalkeeper Dan Crane being forced into a low save before a shot was deflected up off Macpherson and just over the Hednesford goal in the minutes that followed.

Clear-cut chances were few and far between, however, Elliott Durrell almost doubled the lead for Town right on the stroke of half-time when he headed wide at the back post after being left unmarked from a corner.

Town started the second half in as quick a fashion as

Football

the first and Greg Pearson was unlucky to see the ball bobble off both legs with just Lamb to beat after being set up by Durrell.

Bradford would soon lay siege to the home side's goal, with Crane being forced into two smart saves to preserve his side's cleansheet.

Hednesford finally managed to kill off the game though with 15 minutes remaining. Following a corner the ball found its way to Bailey who superbly swivelled and hit a half-volleyed shot over Lamb and into the top corner of the net for a goal of the season contender.

The home side were then content to play out time with the visitors rarely threatening to ultimately see Hednesford pick up three important points to move them two points clear of the chasing pack.

Hednesford Town: Crane, Disney, Campion, Bailey, McCone, Macpherson, Osborne, Durrell (Riley 76), Woolfe (Thompson-Brown 69), Pearson, Taylor (Melbourne 61)
Subs not used: Francis, Lennon

Bradford Park Avenue: Lamb, Howarth, Knowles, Deacey, Hotte, Maxfield, St. Juste (Clamp 70), Walker, Corner, Davidson, Boshell
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Goalscorer Jamey Osborne makes another powerful run towards goal during the home match against Bradford Park

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